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# Translation

VIETNAM: THE ANTI-U.S. RESISTANCE WAR FOR  
NATIONAL SALVATION 1954-1975: MILITARY EVENTS



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## VIETNAM: THE ANTI-U.S. RESISTANCE WAR FOR NATIONAL SALVATION 1954-1975: MILITARY EVENTS

Hanoi CUOC KHANG CHIEN CHONG MY CUU NUOC 1954-1975: NHUNG SU KIEN QUAN SU in Vietnamese 1980 (printing completed 30 May 80) 312 pp

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Publisher's Introduction

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of our Party (3 February), our country's 35th National Day (2 September), and the 90th birthday of our beloved President Ho Chi Minh (19 May), the People's Army Publishing House presents to readers the book "Cuoc Khanh Chien Chong My, Cuu Nuoc (1954-1975): Nhung Su Kien Quan Su" [The Anti-U.S. Resistance War for National Salvation (1954-1975): Military Events], prepared by the War Experiences Recapitulation Committee of the High-Level Military Institute.

The authors of this book did not attempt to present a complete history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, for that is a major undertaking which will require the contributions of many sectors and echelons over the course of many years. As its title implies, the book deals only with the major military events and a number of important events in other relevant spheres. It is intended to reflect in a concise manner the principal historical phases of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, with the goal of contributing to serving the three major anniversaries in 1980.

However, despite those modest requirements, the meticulously researched and selected events that are presented systematically in the book are quite useful to the readers, for they help us better understand, in a general way, the developments of the resistance war and our people's great victory, and especially the skilled, creative leadership of our Party -- the decisive factor leading to that great victory. The organs, schools, and institutes can also find here good materials which can be of help in their research, teaching, and study.



Because of the current limitations regarding sources of materials as well as our ability to evaluate those materials, deficiencies could not be avoided. We respectfully await the contribution of opinions by readers, in order to create favorable conditions for the compilation in future years of complete works regarding the history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

Quan Doi Nhan Dan  
Publishing House

## Chapter I

From July 1954 to the End of 1960

The Southern Revolution Changes Over From the Status of a Political Struggle Demanding That the Other Side Observe the Geneva Agreements to the Status of Con-Serving Forces, Then to an Offensive Status Leading to Local Armed Uprisings, Beginning With the "Simultaneous Uprisings" Movement

1954

15 to 18 July: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee Holds its 6th Plenum.

The Party Central Committee met at a time when the anti-French resistance war was drawing to a close. On the battlefield we were winning one victory after another, while at the talks in Geneva the day on which the Agreements would be signed was close at hand.

At the plenary conference, President Ho Chi Minh read a political report on the new situation and mission.

Analyzing the situation in our country and abroad, the conference concluded that "The U.S. imperialists are a principal obstacle to the restoration of peace in Indochina" and "is becoming the principal direct enemy of the Indochinese people."

The conference decided that the struggle motto and strategy of the Vietnamese revolution in the coming phase would be "Pointing the sharp point of struggle against the U.S. imperialists and the French warmongers; on the basis of the victories that have been won and efforts to achieve peace in Indochina, smashing the U.S. imperialists' plot to prolong and expand the war; and consolidating and developing the accomplishments that have been won in order to achieve unification, complete the attainment of independence, and achieve democracy throughout the nation."

Determining at an early date that the U.S. imperialists were an object of the Vietnamese revolution was a very basic part of the Party line. The resolution of the 6th Plenum of the Party Central Committee had an extremely importance significance and reflected the class stand and the political astuteness of our Party, in order to concentrate the revolutionary forces in correctly attacking the enemy and attaining the basic objectives of the revolution.

20 July: The Geneva Agreements on Indochina signed.

The Agreement and Joint Declaration of the nations participating in the conference acknowledged respect for the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, and stipulated that the French army had to withdraw from the Indochinese countries and that each country in Indochina would hold free general elections to achieve national unification.

With regard to Vietnam, the Joint Declaration stated explicitly that "The military demarcation line is temporary in nature and cannot be regarded as a political or territorial border" and stipulated that the deadline for organizing the general election to unify Vietnam was July 1956.

The success of the Geneva Agreements was a great victory of our army and people after 9 years of a protracted, arduous, but extremely heroic resistance war under the leadership of the Party and President Ho Chi Minh.

It was also a great success of the people of the three Indochinese countries and the people of the world who struggled for peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism.

The Geneva Agreements were a strong blow against the plot of the U.S. imperialists to expand and prolong the Indochinese war. Those leading imperialists regarded the Geneva Conference as "a disaster," as "a major forward stride of communism which could lead to the loss of all of Southeast Asia." (From a secret Department of Defense document.)

The U.S. imperialists, with extremely insidious intentions, were unwilling to sign the Joint Declaration of the Geneva Conference. On the same day, 20 July 1954, the U.S. President Eisenhower cynically announced that "The United States will not sign the Geneva Agreements and will therefore not be bound by them."

22 July: President Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal on the occasion of the success of the Geneva Conference.

President Ho Chi Minh spoke of the great victory of our people in the resistance war against the French colonialists: "For the first time in history a small, weak colony has defeated a powerful colonial country. That was a glorious victory of the Vietnamese people and was also a victory of the forces of peace, democracy, and socialism in the world."

He confirmed the great merit of our compatriots in the south, who "are the first to go and the last to return" in great enterprise of defending the homeland. He pointed out that "Our compatriots in the South were the first to begin the resistance war and have a very high degree of consciousness. I am certain that our compatriots will place the benefit of the nation as a whole above the benefit of the locality, place the long-range benefit before the short-range benefit, and join their compatriots all over the nation in striving to consolidate peace, achieve unification, and complete the attainment of independence and democracy throughout the nation. The Party, the government, and I continually monitor the all-out efforts of our compatriots and it is certain that they will be victorious."

President Ho Chi Minh set forth the mission and long-range, arduous nature of the succeeding revolutionary phase: "Struggling to consolidate peace, achieve unification, and complete independence and democracy is also a long-range, arduous struggle. In order to win victory, all of our people, soldiers, and cadres from north to south must closely unite: their thoughts must be unified and their acts must also be unanimous."

He appealed for the people of the entire nation to unite in struggle to unify the nation: "I ardently appeal for all people who sincerely love their country, regardless of social stratum, religion, or political views, and regardless of which side they stood on in the past, to sincerely cooperate and, for the sake of the country, endeavor to achieve peace, unification, independence, and democracy in our beloved Vietnam. If the entire country is united, with ten thousand people acting as one, we are certain to be victorious."

5 to 7 September: The Political Bureau issues a Resolution on "The New Situation, the New Missions, and the New Policy of the Party."

After the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met and determined that our people's struggle had entered a new phase with new characteristics:

-- The first characteristic was that we had shifted over from war to peace: "During the past 8 years, all sacrifices and efforts of the Vietnamese people have been intended to win victory for the national liberation movement. Now, with the cessation of hostilities, we are working and striving in peace. That is a great change which greatly affects all of our work."

-- The second characteristic is that the North and South were temporarily divided into two regions: the North belonged to us, while the South was temporarily controlled by the other side. We were no longer in a state of war. That was a great, complicated change.

-- The third characteristic was that both the rural areas and cities in the North had all necessary conditions for undergoing construction on a national scale. That was also a major change.

-- The fourth characteristic was that we changed over from dispersion to concentration. In the past we had been engaged in a guerrilla war, but now the situation had changed, which required us to concentrate our leadership on constructing the North and guiding the work in the South. "That is a great change, and is also an arduous struggle."

-- The fifth characteristic was that the relationship among Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea had also changed. The relationship among the three countries had to be placed on a new basis.

With regard to the revolutionary mission in the new phase, the Resolution affirmed that "Our people's mission of struggling for national salvation has not yet been fulfilled, and the patriotic struggle has not ended because of the cessation of



hostilities. That struggle is still continuing, but the mode of struggle must change. We must complete the enterprise of national liberation under a new form of struggle."

Therefore, from then on, for a certain period of time the common mission of our Party would be to "Unite and lead the people in struggling to implement the ceasefire in order to consolidate peace; endeavor to complete the land reform, recover and increase production, and build up the People's Army in order to consolidate the North; and maintain and promote the political struggle of the people of the South to consolidate peace, achieve unity, and complete independence and democracy throughout the country."

The Resolution also observed that "At present, although there has been a ceasefire peace has not been consolidated, there is still a threat of war, and half of our country -- the South -- is still controlled by our adversaries. Especially, the international reactionary powers, led by the U.S. aggressors, are feverishly organizing the SEATO aggressor bloc to sabotage the ceasefire treaty in Indochina, in hopes of starting a new war of aggression. Therefore, strengthening the People's Army is a very important mission of the Party, the government, and all our people."

As for our work in the South, the Resolution affirmed that "The Party's mission in the South during the present phase is to lead the people in the South in struggling to implement the ceasefire, consolidating peace, achieving freedom and democracy, improving the people's living standards, achieving unification, and striving to win independence. At the same time, we must lead the people in struggling to oppose activities intended to terrorize, suppress, and destroy our bases and the arrest of our cadres and the revolutionary masses, and oppose the enemy's attacks and preserve the rights the masses won during the resistance war period, especially in our former base areas and guerrilla areas."

"Our motto at the present time is engaging in legal and semi-legal activities, and combining legal work with illegal work. As regards the mass organizations and Party organizations, we must endeavor to allow them to exist legally and to engage in legal activities."

The Resolution of the Political Bureau Conference of September 1954 is an important document. Just after the Geneva Agreements were signed the Political Bureau promptly set forth the direction of the missions and specific tasks of the entire Party, the entire population, and the entire army in the new phase, and established a basis on which to finalize the Party's revolutionary line in the future.

10 October: Hanoi, the capital, liberated.

According to the terms of the Geneva Agreements on 10 October 1954 the Vietnam People's Army took over control of the capital. Hanoi was liberated in a festive atmosphere of celebrating victory after more than 7 years of life under the control of the French colonialists. The public welfare activities, such as electricity, sanitation, trains, electric trams, etc., went on as usual. The people's living conditions were rapidly stabilized. That was the result of a resolute struggle on the part of our military delegation to the Joint Commission and of the spirit of

resolute struggle against sabotage by the enemy on the part of the people of Hanoi, among whom the working class played a vanguard role.

Hanoi was liberated after the victory of a struggle lasting nearly 100 years and after nearly 20 years of our people's fierce resistance war against the French colonialist aggressors.

On 1 January 1955, on the occasion of the new year, the people of Hanoi held a rally to celebrate the return of the Party Central Committee, the government, and President Ho Chi Minh to Hanoi after 8 years in the Viet Bac base zone leading the resistance war against the French colonialists.

In his speech at the rally, President Ho Chi Minh affirmed that "The North and the South form a single family; they are kith-and-kin and are inseparable. We must tighten the close bond between the South and the North," and that "We must achieve broad, close solidarity from North to South and must support our compatriots in the South, who are struggling to win freedom and democracy in correct accordance with the Geneva Agreements."

With the return of the leadership organs of the Party and state to the capital, Hanoi again became the political, economic, and cultural center -- and the heart -- of the nation, with two strategic missions in the South and North.

6 August: Ceasefire in Laos.

According to the terms of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina, beginning on 6 August 1954 there would be a ceasefire in the Laos war theater.

At the end of August 1954 the Pathet Lao troops came from all over the country to assemble in the two provinces of Sam Nua and Phong Saly.

In mid-November 1954 the volunteer Vietnamese troops who had operated in Laos during the anti-French resistance war completed their withdrawal to Vietnam.

Beginning in the final days of November 1954, the Laotian reactionaries mobilized troops to attack the assembly areas of the Pathet Lao, beginning with the attack on Muong Pon in Sam Nua Province. The struggle between the revolutionary forces and counterrevolutionary forces in Laos was resumed under new circumstances and new forms. In the past the Laotian revolutionary forces only had small units stationed in small base areas scattered about in many places, but now had a completely liberated area consisting of two provinces which bordered on the socialist bloc and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In the liberated area there was a central organ which led the revolution all over Laos and a revolutionary administration extending from the provincial level down to the village level. The Pathet Lao troops advanced to the creation of concentrated units at the battalion level, thus creating conditions for the future victories of the Laotian revolution.

From that time on, in the struggle to advance to the fulfillment of the difficult missions of the revolutions of each country, the Laotian revolution and the Vietnamese revolution supported each other more and more closely, helped each



other more and more closely, helped each other develop, and combined their efforts to defeat the common enemies -- the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

2 December: The U.S. imperialists oust the French and jump into South Vietnam.

After their defeat and their failure to sabotage the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina, the basic plot of the U.S. toward Vietnam was annihilating, by all means, our people's patriotic movement, annexing South Vietnam, permanently dividing our country, transforming South Vietnam into a U.S. neocolony and military base, and establishing a defense line to prevent socialism from spreading into Southeast Asia, while also using South Vietnam as a base from which to attack the North of our country, an outpost of the socialist system, in hopes of squashing and repulsing socialism in that region and surrounding and threatening the other socialist countries.

The specific plots of the U.S. in that phase were to:

- Quickly throw out the French and exercise sole rule in South Vietnam and Indochina.
- Suppressing the revolutionary movement and installing neocolonialism in South Vietnam and Indochina.
- Sabotaging the Geneva Agreements, permanently dividing Vietnam, and transforming South Vietnam into U.S. bastion in Southeast Asia.

On 8 September 1954 the U.S. inveigled England, France, and a number of vassal states into setting up SEATO, and placed South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea in the area of protection of that bloc.

On 17 November 1954 General Collins, the U.S. Ambassador to South Vietnam, arrived in Saigon with a six-point U.S. plan:

- Supporting only Ngo Dinh Diem and aiding Diem directly, not via France.
- Forming a 150,000-man "national" army for Diem trained and armed by the U.S.
- Setting up a "National Assembly" and declaring "independence."
- Carrying out a "land reform" and settling refugees from the North.
- Changing the tax structure and giving priority to U.S. goods and capital.
- Training administrative cadres for Diem.

Under pressure from the U.S., on 2 December 1954 France had to join the U.S. in signing a treaty calling for the withdrawal of French troops from South Vietnam and, on 10 December, to agree to a plan for the organization and training of a puppet army under the guidance of the U.S.

On 22 December 1954 Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Saigon and promised to provide Dien with \$300 million in direct aid in 1955.

1955

3 to 12 March: Party Central Committee Hold 7th Plenum.

With the situation in the South undergoing new transformations on the part of the enemy as well as in the mass revolutionary movement, while in the North there were very serious problems left behind by the enemy in the newly liberated areas, there was serious famine, and lackeys planted by the enemy were engaging in acts of opposition, our Party Central Committee held a plenary session to evaluate the situation and set forth new missions for the entire nation.

The conference concluded that "The U.S. imperialists are intervening more and more deeply in Vietnam and are gradually forcing the French colonialists into a secondary position. They are allying with the French colonialist faction that is opposed to the Agreements and is relying on the feudal landlords and our country's most reactionary comprador capitalists -- headed by Ngo Dinh Dien -- in hopes of sabotaging peace, unification, independence, and democracy in our country, specifically in hopes of sabotaging the results of the ceasefire agreement, sabotaging the unification of Vietnam, and preparing to rekindle the war in Indochina.

The conference confirmed that "Our people's concrete, direct enemies at present are the U.S. imperialists, the French colonialist faction that opposes the Agreements, and the Ngo Dinh Dien clique. The U.S. imperialists are the leading, most dangerous enemy."

"The immediate struggle objectives of our people in the present phase are peace, unification, independence, and democracy."

Therefore, we would fight the U.S. imperialists, "our direct, immediate enemy," and the "principal enemy of the world's people," by means of the combined strength of the two revolutions of the era: the people's democratic national revolution and the socialist revolution.

"The common slogan of our patriotic struggle at the present time is consolidating peace, achieving unification, and completing independence and democracy throughout the nation. Consolidating peace and achieving unification are the key slogan.

"Our struggle for peace, unification, independence, and democracy is long-range, arduous, and complicated in nature, but it is certain to be victorious."

The plenum also delineated our strategy of aiming the sharp point of the struggle toward the U.S. imperialists, fully exploiting the contradictions with the ranks of the enemy, and uniting with and winning over all forces that can be united with and won over.

With regard to the relationship between the North and the South, the Resolution of the plenum determined that "The North plays the most decisive role with regard to the over-all enterprise of liberating the South and unifying the nation, while the South plays a decisive, direct role in overthrowing the ruling yoke of the imperialists and their lackeys in order to liberate the South, unify the nation, and complete the people's national democratic revolution." At the plenum President Ho said, "The North is the pillar."

The plenum set forth the five immediate missions of the entire Party, population, and army:

1. Continuing the struggle to implement the ceasefire agreement, consolidate peace, and advance to unifying the nation.
2. Strengthening the North in all respects.
3. Maintaining and promoting the political struggle of the people in the South.
4. Expanding and consolidating the national united front throughout the nation.
5. Stepping up the diplomatic work, strengthening solidarity and friendship with friendly countries, and winning the sympathy and support of the world's people.

The important significance of the 7th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was that on the basis of the Political Bureau resolution of September 1954 it affirmed and declared that the U.S. imperialists had become the leading, most dangerous enemy of our people and set forth the line of our national revolution and the lines of each region, and the relationship between the two regions, while also setting forth the policies for resolving the urgent problems in the South and in the North. The plenum's resolution was a proper, creative development of the Party's revolutionary line in the new phase.

20 to 26 March: The Fourth Session of the First National Assembly.

That was the first session of the National Assembly held in the capital since the victory of the anti-French resistance war.

The National Assembly set forth three missions for our people in the new phase:

1. Continuing the struggle to fully implement the ceasefire agreement, consolidate peace, and advance to national reunification by means of a general election.
2. Strengthening the North by promoting and completing the land reform, endeavoring to strengthen national defense and the people's governmental administration, and strengthening the diplomatic work.
3. Expanding and consolidating popular solidarity in our country and winning the sympathy and support of the people of the world.

The National Assembly resolution manifested the solidarity, unanimity, and iron determination of our people in, under the leadership of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party,

continuing the struggle to achieve peace, unification, independence, and democracy throughout our country.

April 1955: The U.S. and Diem annihilate the armed forces of the religions sects. Our Party adopts the policy of persuading the religions sects to oppose the U.S. and Diem.

Beginning in the first part of 1955, in addition to suppressing the revolutionary movement of the masses the U.S. and Diem, in order to eliminate the influence and power of France in the South, launched a series of campaigns to annihilate such pro-French religions sects as the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, and Binh Xuyen.

In view of that situation, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee and the Regional Party Committee of Nam Bo adopted the policy of using and taking advantage of the religions sects to oppose the U.S. and Diem, win over and rally their forces, and build up our armed forces:

In October 1955 the Party Central Committee sent a directive to the South which stated that "We must clearly understand that the groups that are now opposing Diem, such as the Hoa Hao, the Binh Xuyen, and the Cao Dai in Nam Bo, the Dai Viet Party in Quang Tri, and the Nationalist Party [Quoc Dan Dang] in Quang Nam are doing so for their own benefit and status, but that they also oppose us and that all of them have committed cruel acts against the people. But they are now opposing Diem, so we must win them over by fully exploiting the contradictions. But in winning them over we must base ourselves on a certain standpoint, and our cooperation with them must be based on the most urgent requirements of our nation at the present time: peace and unification. Our cooperation must not be unprincipled and not in accordance with a standpoint. But because their nature is as described above, we must be very careful and clever in winning them over and cooperating with them. We must accurately evaluate the nature and contradictions with regard to Diem, and always remain vigilant in order to guard against all of their plots. In winning them over and cooperating with them we must principally endeavor to win over the infrastructure, while also establishing ties with and win over the upper-echelon groups that can be won over or with whom we can establish ties. We must not win over or establish ties with the chieftains, who have committed many crimes against the people."

The Nam Bo Regional Party Committee resolution of December 1956 stated:

"We must endeavor to reform and rally the religious sect forces smashed by the U.S. and Diem so that they can stand in the ranks of the people, and take advantage of the appellation of dissident religious sects to annihilate the bullies."

That timely policy brought about a number of results: the Hoa Hao troop remnants who came over to the revolution brought along nearly 1,000 weapons, a fully armed 200-man unit of the Binh Xuyen armed forces joined us in the Dong Thap Muoi area, and 500 Cao Dai troops entered the Duong Minh Chau war zone in Tay Ninh.

In 1956, the armed forces of the religious sects which fled to the revolutionary side, operating independently or in coordination with the revolutionary armed



forces, fought in such battles as those at Cai San and Ben Cui, and engaged in armed propaganda along routes 13 and 14 and in Dau Tieng.

However, due to their class nature and because of the surrender of the French colonialists, the resistance put up by the religious sects was weak and ultimately they rapidly fell apart. A small number came over to us but most surrendered to the Ngo Dinh Diem administration or were wiped out.

May 1955: The North is completely liberated.

On 13 May the French colonial army withdrew from Hai Phong and on 22 May it withdrew from Cat Ba Island. In half of our country -- north of the 17th Parallel -- there were no longer any aggressor troops.

We controlled the entire North, which had the scale of a nation and the strength of a people who had just won victory. It had rich natural resources and a plentiful labor force with which to develop its economy, overcome the aftereffects of war, begin the construction of socialism, promote the strengthening of national defense, maintain order and security, and develop culturally and economically, while at the same time bringing into play the North's role as "the pillar of the entire nation" in order to liberate the South and unify the nation.

Under the leadership of the Party, the people of the North endeavored to take advantage of their advantages and overcome their difficulties, especially the workers and laboring peasants, who came forth with innovations and achieved important accomplishments. The revolutionary ardor and vigor of the masses were brought into play to a high degree in developing the economy, overcoming hunger, wiping out the spies, commandos, and local bandits, and building a wholesome, healthy life for the people.

The diplomatic work was also stepped up. After exchanging diplomatic organs with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France, and China in 1954, in 1955 we exchanged diplomatic organs with the other socialist countries and with the Republic of Indonesia, and obtained the positive assistance of the fraternal socialist countries with which to build our country.

July 1955: The struggle movement demanding a consultative conference to peacefully unify the homeland.

On 6 June 1955 the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declared its readiness to hold a consultative conference with the authorities in the South, beginning on 20 July 1955, to discuss the organization of a general election in July 1956 to peacefully the nation, as stipulated by the Geneva Agreements.

On 19 July 1955 our government sent a diplomatic note to the administration in the South recommending that it send a delegation to participate in a consultative conference, which would begin on 20 July 1955.

Even before the signatures to the Geneva Agreements had dried the U.S. and Diem many times announced that they did not recognize them. On 28 February 1955, Radio

Saigon declared that "In fact, there cannot be a general election in 1956." On 6 July 1955 Nixon, the U.S. Vice President, said that "The United States fully supports the refusal of the Diem government to participate in a general election to unify the country."

Encouraged by his U.S. masters, on 16 July 1955 Ngo Dinh Diem declared that "There will be no consultative conference regarding a general election. We did not sign the Geneva Agreements and are in no way bound by them."

On 20 July 1955 Diem had his lackeys gather together a gang of hooligans to demonstrate against the Geneva Agreements and wreck the headquarters of the International Commission in Saigon.

Under the leadership of the Party, on 3 July the industrial workers and laboring people in Saigon organized two large demonstrations to demand a consultative conference on a general election to unify the homeland and to demand freedom for the members of the "Committee to Aid War Victims."

The Diem administration mobilized its army and police to oppose the mass demonstrations. Despite all the opposition and suppression by the enemy, between 60 and 90 percent of the people all over the South participated in labor strikes and merchants' strikes. In Saigon, 80 percent of the people participated in a general strike which paralyzed the city's activities for 10 hours. In My Tho, on the same day -- 10 July -- the labor strikes and merchants' strikes forced the city to completely cease operations for a day.

In Da Nang, because of the enemy's terrorism the masses arose, burned the Vo Tanh post and destroyed the treasury.

The struggle movement to demand a consultative conference to achieve the peaceful unification of the homeland, which began in July 1955, lasted for months and spread to many localities, such as Sa Dec, Chau Doc, Vinh Long, Thua Thien, Hue, Binh Dinh, Khanh Hoa, Phan Rang, Phan Thiet, Quang Nam, and Quang Tri.

13 to 20 August: The Party Central Committee holds 8th Plenum.

Since the 7th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in March 1955 there had been new developments in world situation and in the situation in our country. The world situation in general had improved somewhat but the Far Eastern situation was still tense. In our country, the period of regrouping and transferring troops and completing the liberation of the North had ended. In the South, the U.S. imperialists were stepping up their intervention and their opposition to the Geneva Agreements, had rejected the consultative conference, and had thrown out the French. The contradictions between the U.S. and France and between the pro-U.S. and pro-French factions became increasingly sharp.

The entire nation was confronted with two major missions: consolidating the North and resolutely struggling to keep the peace and advance to the unification of the country. In view of that situation, the Party Central Committee held its Eighth Plenum and set forth the mission: "Uniting the people all over the country to struggle to unify Vietnam on the basis of independence and democracy."

The conference continued to affirm that "Our specific, immediate enemies at the present time are the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys (including the pro-U.S. puppets and pro-U.S. French colonialists, who served as lackeys of the U.S. imperialists). The U.S. imperialists are the leading, most dangerous enemy."

The Resolution stated the immediate the immediate mission of the Party as being "endeavoring to assemble the forces of the entire population into a broad united front with an appropriate common program in order to struggle against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys and achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy and by peaceful means, while also struggling to consolidate peace and prevent war from returning to Indochina. If we are to win victory in that struggle, we must promote the task of consolidating the north, and in order to consolidate the North we must strengthen our guidance of the economic and financial work and endeavor to complete the land reform, strengthen national defense, strengthen the maintenance of security, etc."

With regard to the struggle to unify the nation, we advocated gradual, step-by-step reunification, but it was necessary to clearly realize that each step would be a process of difficult struggle. To win victory it would be necessary to expand the united front throughout the nation, rally all national, democratic, and peace forces in the North and in the South, win over anyone who could be won over, neutralize anyone we could neutralize, divide the U.S. and France, divide the pro-U.S. and pro-French factions, isolate the U.S. imperialists and the obstinate pro-U.S. clique, and overcome all obstacles in our country and abroad.

In order to achieve national unification, it would be necessary to expand the united national front. The conference approved the common program of the United National Front to serve as a basis on which to rally all national, democratic, and peace forces throughout the nation to struggle against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, win national unification, and construct a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam.

The conference stressed that "In order to unify the nation the essential matter is that we endeavor to consolidate the North, while also maintaining and promoting the struggle to of the people in the South."

"To consolidate the North is to strengthen our basic forces and create a firm basis of support on which the entire nation can win victory in the struggle to consolidate peace and achieve national unification.

Our line toward consolidating the North was to "consolidate and develop the people's democratic regime, and advance gradually and step-by-step to socialism."

The resolution stressed that "In the mission set forth by the Party, the class struggle and the national liberation movement have both entered a more difficult period, so it is necessary to strengthen our ideological leadership, consolidate the Party, positively perfect organization, and rectify the Party's work methods."

The Central Committee appealed for all cadres and Party members to heighten their struggle will, thoroughly understand the thoughts, lines, and policies of the Party, have confidence in that we would inevitably be victorious, unite closely

around President Ho Chi Minh and the Party Central Committee, be determined to overcome all difficulties, and endeavor to fulfill the difficult but extremely glorious missions of the Party.

10 September: Formation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front.

The Congress of the United National Front, which met from 5 September to 10 September in Hanoi, decided to form the Vietnam Fatherland Front to continue the Lien Viet Front undertaking of uniting the entire population.

The summary program of the Fatherland Front included 10 points:

1. Completing national independence.
2. Achieving national unification.
3. Building a democratic regime.
4. Developing the economy and increasing production.
5. Carrying out a land reform.
6. Implementing a rational social policy.
7. Developing culture and education.
8. Strengthening national defense and defending the homeland.
9. Implementing a foreign policy of peace and independence.
10. Uniting the nation's people.

The Congress elected President Ho Chi Minh as Honorary Chairman of the Front, Ton Duc Thang as Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee, and 98 members of the Front Central Committee to represent all mass organizations of many different political tendencies, religions and class composition.

The formation of the Vietnam Fatherland Front signified a developmental step in national solidarity in the new revolutionary phase. It was intended to rally all national, democratic, and peace forces throughout the nation to struggle against the U.S. imperialists, consolidate peace, achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy, and advance to the construction of a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam.

1956

19 to 24 April: The Party Central Committee holds its 9th Plenum.

The conference listened to a report by the Vietnam Lao Dong Party which had participated in the 20th Congress of the Communists Party of the Soviet Union.



While studying the views regarding capabilities to prevent war, about peaceful coexistence, about the transition to peace, etc., of the Resolution of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, our Party Central Committee adopted a correct viewpoint: "While we believe that it is possible to prevent war, we do not forget that as long as imperialism exists there will still be an economic basis for war, so the people of the world must continually strengthen the struggle for peace and must be very diligent toward the plots of those who start wars. While we acknowledge that some nations are capable of advancing to socialism via the path of peace, we must remember that since the bourgeois class still possesses a strong military and police apparatus and resolutely uses weapons to suppress the revolutionary movement, a fierce armed struggle to win political power will be unavoidable, so the proletarian class must prepare in advance."

Therefore, with regard to our country's revolution: "Our Party is even more confident that its line of consolidating the North, paying attention to the South, and struggling to achieve national unification on the basis of independence and democracy and by peaceful means is very correct. However, the reactionary forces still exist in half of our country and are plotting to start a war, so we must continually remain vigilant, endeavor to strengthen national defense, and be prepared to cope with all eventualities."

Those correct viewpoints reflect our Party's loyalty to Marxism-Leninism, its independent spirit, and its creative application of Marxism-Leninism to the actualities of our country's revolution.

8 to 9 June: The Political Bureau meets and issues a resolution on "The situation and missions of the revolution in the South,"

Two years after the signing of the Geneva Agreements, the struggle of the people in the South to achieve the unification of Vietnam became increasingly fierce. The enemy were making increasingly greater efforts to sabotage the consultative conference on the general election, opposing the revolution with force of arms, and suppressing and terrorizing the political movement of the masses.

The revolutionary movement demanded guidance that was appropriate to a situation that was undergoing new development.

The Political Bureau issued a resolution on "The situation and missions of the revolution in the South" which declared that "The regime in the South is a dictatorial, fascist regime of the most reactionary pro-U.S. comprador capitalists and feudalists .... The South is becoming a U.S. colony and military base."

Therefore, "Our revolution in the South is national and democratic in nature. The mission of the revolution in the South is oppose imperialism and feudalism."

On the basis of the lines that had been affirmed in the Central Committee Resolution, the Political Bureau noted that "It is extremely important that we endeavor to build up the revolutionary forces." Although "the form of our struggle throughout the nation at present is political struggle and not armed struggle," "that does not preclude armed self-defense under certain circumstances." It stressed the necessity of "consolidating the existing armed and semi-armed forces

and creating bases to serve as sources of support. At the same time, we must build strong mass bases to create basic conditions for maintaining and developing armed forces."

The Political Bureau set forth that struggle mission in order to set up a broad united national front to oppose the U.S. and Diem and struggle to demand the formation of a national democratic Coalition Government in the South. The Political Bureau regarded the consolidation of the Party in the South as "a key, decisive task."

The resolution of the Political Bureau conference included new guidance. Most important, it dealt with the topics of armed struggle and the building up of armed forces and base areas. That was a reorientation which amounted to a new line with regard to revolutionary methods in the South. At the same time, on the basis of the actual situation of the revolution during the past 2 years, the Party explicitly stated its policy of forming a broad United Front to oppose the U.S. and Diem and setting up a national democratic Coalition Government in the South.

July 1956: Completion of the land reform in the North.

Following the land reform phases in the old free areas, in 1955 the third and fourth land reform phases were carried out and expanded to include the newly liberated localities.

The fifth phase of the land reform began in January 1956. That phase, the last and largest, was carried out in more than 1,600 villages with a total population of 6 million. Most of the villages were in areas that had been temporarily occupied by the enemy.

In the summer and fall of 1956 the land reform campaign was completed in the delta and midlands areas and in more than 200 mountain-region villages. In the remaining mountain-region villages there were carried out rent-reduction campaigns or other campaigns of a democratic nature, to differing degrees.

In mid-July the Central Land Reform Committee made a summary report of the final phase to the Party Central Committee and the Council of Ministers.

The land reform and the democratic reforms achieved great results:

Politically, the peasants arose to struggle for the overthrow of the landlord class, a principal objective of the people's democratic national revolution. The laboring peasants completely escaped from the yoke of the feudal landlords, which had existed for thousands of years in our country, and truly became the masters in the countryside.

Economically, the land reform permanently eliminated the feudal land ownership system and land ownership by the country-stealing imperialists. Some 810,000 hectares which had been owned by the landlords and imperialists were divided up among 2,220,000 laboring peasant and poor households, totalling 9 million people, in the rural areas.

With regard to ideology and organization, the land reform clearly delineated the boundary between labor and exploitation and developed the forces of the Party and the mass organizations.

In the implementation process, in addition to the basic victories we made a number of mistakes with regard to the methods of struggling against class enemies and in rectifying organization. Those mistakes violated the Party's common line in the rural areas and the Party principles and statutes, and also violated the democratic legal system.

On 18 August 1956, President Ho Chi Minh sent a letter to the people in rural areas and to cadres which affirmed the accomplishments of the land reform and praised the cadres, the peasants, and the army for having contributed to the common victory, while also appealing for everyone to unite and resolutely correct mistakes.

With the victory of the land reform, the anti-feudal revolution was essentially completed in the North. That was an event of historical significance and opened the way for the rural areas in the North to gradually advance to socialism via the path of collectivization.

August 1956: Comrade Le Duan writes a document regarding the revolutionary line in the South.

During the past 2 years the revolutionary situation in the South had demonstrated that the fundamental path for winning victory was the path of violence: the legality of Geneva could not replace the legality of the people. "As long as the bourgeois class continues to control a strong military and police apparatus and is determined to use force to suppress the revolutionary movement, a fierce armed struggle to win political power will be unavoidable, so the proletarian class must prepare in advance." (Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the Central Committee, April 1956.)

In August 1956 comrade Le Duan, a member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee who was on assignment in the South, on the basis of scientifically analyzing the social situation, the enemy's situation, and our situation in the South, in the nation as a whole, and in the world, and on the basis of the laws of revolutionary struggle and the actual events in the South during the past 2 years, drafted the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South" to guide the revolutionary movement in the South at that time.

That important document clearly defined the nature of society in the South and set forth the revolutionary path as the only correct path along which our people in the South could advance to winning political power.

Actual events increasingly demonstrated that the puppet regime in the South was a lackey regime of the U.S. imperialists which was insanely suppressing, and attempting to eradicate, the revolution in the South and was implementing a neocolonial policy. Under that regime, our people in the South not only faced the situation of their country being divided and threatened by war but were increasingly repressed, exploited, and horribly killed by the U.S.-Diem fascist



dictatorship policies. That situation was certain to place the people in the South in a situation of having no other recourse than to arise and carry out a revolution to save the nation and themselves. Therefore, the objective of the revolution in the South was to overthrow the U.S.-Diem fascist dictatorship via the path of revolution.

That document contributed to illuminating the path on which the Party members, cadres, and people of the South were engaging in extremely fierce struggles, and was also an important contribution which posed basic viewpoints in order to draft our Party's revolutionary line in the South.

September 1956: The Party Central Committee holds 10th Plenum.

The North had completed the anti-feudal revolution and implemented a victorious land reform, but had committed mistakes in carrying them out. Therefore, the Party Central Committee held its 10th Plenum.

With regard to the land reform, the plenum affirmed that "the victory of the land reform was great and fundamental" and that "the basic completion of the anti-feudal revolution in the North is an event of historic significance," and set forth the mission of resolutely correcting the mistakes committed in the land reform, rectifying organization, and building on the results and victories that have been attained.

The 10th Plenum of the Party Central Committee manifested a sincere, serious attitude and expressed our Party's readiness to accept responsibility before history and the people and its determination to correct mistakes in order to advance the revolution.

The plenum severely criticized the incorrect viewpoints and standpoints, especially empiricism, dogmatism, and the lack of independence and creativity.

After severely criticizing and disciplining some members of the Party Central Committee, the plenum unanimously recommended that President Ho Chi Minh serve as Party Chairman and as General Secretary of the Party Central Committee.

The Resolution of the plenum brought about unity in thought and consciousness regarding the Party's line and organization. Therefore, despite the mistakes committed in carrying out the land reform and in rectifying organization, our Party overcame and rapidly consolidated its organization, and created solid confidence among the masses. The entire Party and the entire population united closely around the Party Central Committee and President Ho Chi Minh and were determined to pass through the rough, wisting segments of the revolutionary path. That was also a very great historical lesson learned by our Party in the process of leading the revolution.

With regard to national unification, after evaluating the good points and deficiencies of the movement, the plenum concluded that "The enterprise of struggling for unification is a revolutionary mission. It is an enterprise of continuing and completing the people's democratic national revolution throughout the nation, a



revolutionary enterprise, and a long, arduous, and complicated struggle for unification, but it is certain to be victorious," with the motto "Continue to conserve and build up forces, struggle persistently and over a long period of time, and oppose adventuism while also opposing efforts to annihilate the struggle."

Those revolutionary viewpoints and methods, which were principled and flexible, served as correct guidelines for the advance of the revolutionary struggle movement in the south.

December 1956: Plenum of the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee.

Implementing the Resolution of the Political Bureau conference of June 1956, and on the basis of the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South," in December 1956 the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee met and concluded that "The regime in South Vietnam exists on the basis of violence and aid from the U.S. imperialists. They are determined to submerge the revolution in blood and fire. Due to the needs of the revolutionary movement in the South, to a certain extent it is necessary to have self-defense and armed propaganda forces in order to support the political struggle and eventually use those armed forces to carry out a revolution to overthrow U.S.-Dien" and "The path of advance of the revolution in the South is to use a violent general uprising to win political power."

The plenum set forth the following mission: "Positively build armed propaganda forces, set up secret armed units, create base areas in the jungle-and-mountain region, win over, proselytize, reform, and rally the religious sect forces routed by U.S.-Dien, bring them over to the side of the people, and take advantage of the appellation of dissident religious sects to kill tyrants."

1956: The Chinese rulers urge us to set a "protracted ambush" in the South.

After Geneva Conference on Indochina the strategic interests of China were to protect its security in the south, expand its influence in Asia, Africa, and especially in Southeast Asia, and create favorable conditions for fulfilling its first five-year plan and taking a "great leap forward" in strengthening its forces, in order to carry out its scheme of big-nation expansionism, first of all in Southeast Asia. China entered into a detente with the U.S. and began negotiations with the U.S. at Warsaw.

China wanted to control Vietnam, use it as a staging area from which to expand into Southeast Asia, and use North Vietnam and northern Laos as a buffer area to protect its security to the south.

In 1956, in a telegram sent to our Party, the Central Committee of the Chinese. "Communist" party made the following recommendation to our Party's Central Committee: "... In the South, you should carry out a national democratic revolution. However, at the present time you cannot yet bring about a revolutionary change but can only use an appropriate motto: setting a protracted ambush, building up forces, forming ties with the masses, and awaiting the opportune moment, i.e. it is possible to carry out such struggles as protecting the lives and rights of the people, propagandizing peaceful unification, expanding normal relations, etc. The situation of a divided Vietnam may last a long time: only when the situation

in Asia and the world undergo great new transformations, or when Vietnam itself gives rise to certain fundamental changes, will the situation change ...."

Prior to that, in July 1955, the General Secretary of the Chinese "communist" party -- then Deng Xiaoping -- threatened Vietnam as follows: "The use of armed force to unify the country may result in two possibilities: one is victory and the other is the loss of the North itself."

In November Mao Zedong himself told the Vietnamese leaders: "The division of Vietnam cannot be resolved in a brief period of time, but only over a long period of time .... If 10 years are not enough, then it will take 100 years."

That line clearly exposed China's plot of wanting us to restrict our armed struggle and of maintaining the situation of a divided Vietnam for a long time. Fearing that the U.S. imperialist would expand the war, it wanted to use the North as a buffer zone for China. However, our Party resolutely refused to accept that malevolent advice. The great victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation exposed and smashed China's insidious plot. With the independent, autonomous line of our Party, our people heroically arose to defeat the enemy and did not passively "set a protracted ambush and await the opportune moment," as recommended by the Beijing rulers.

1957

March 1957: The Party Central Committee holds its 12th Plenum.

The plenum discussed and issued resolutions on two topics: the 1957 state plan and the building up of the army and consolidating national defense.

1. With regard to the 1957 state plan, the plenum set forth the objective of fulfilling the mission of restoring the economy (to the 1939 production level) in order to create a basis on which to change over to a new phase, the phase of economic development.

2. With regard to building up the army and consolidating national defense, the plenum discussed the mission and motto of developing the army, guidance of the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense during the coming period and the important tasks requiring immediate attention. It also discussed the matter of strengthening the Party's leadership in order to promote the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense.

The plenum stated that in view of the war-provoking plots of the imperialists, headed by the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, our people and army must always remain vigilant and always maintain and strengthen their will to fight. "We must positively build up the army and consolidate national defense: that is one of the key missions of our Party and people at the present time."

The plenum set forth our army-building mottoes: "Positively build a powerful people's army and gradually advance to professionalization and modernization" and "We must have not only strong regular forces but also strong reserve forces."

Our mission for the present and for a certain time in the future was: "Positively striving to continue to implement and victoriously fulfill the plan to build a People's Army and enable our army to become a professional, relatively modern revolutionary army, while also building a foundation for the other armed forces branches and combat arms."

In all aspects of the state's work, in the over-all state plan and in plans of individual sectors, it was necessary to manifest awareness of building up and consolidating the rear area, combine the economic and cultural needs with the national defense needs, and combine the peacetime needs with the wartime needs. The army itself had to participate positively in consolidating the rear area.

It was necessary to make the mission of building up the army and consolidating national defense a common undertaking of the Party and people. We had to strengthen the leadership of the Party, mobilize the entire army to positively study and work, and develop the capability of the people to participate in the task of building up the army and consolidating national defense.

The 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee had a very important significance with regard to the application of Marxism-Leninism to building up our people's armed forces and national defense under the actual conditions of our country. The resolution of the plenum a document with an important theoretical nature with regard to our Party's military line, delineated the direction of building a professional, modern army and a solid national defense on the basis of closely combining economic development and the consolidation of national defense, and relying principally on our own efforts while availing ourselves of the developed economies and modern scientific-technical accomplishments of the fraternal nations, in order to create conditions for the victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

October 1957: Formation of Unit 250, the first battalion-sized concentrated unit in Nam Bo.

Implementing the June 1956 resolution of the Political Bureau and the December 1956 resolution of the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee, in the latter part of 1956, from the cadres and men who remained behind, the armed masses in the self-defense struggle and armed propaganda units, and members of the forces of the dissident religious sects, we were able to organize 37 armed companies to engage in secret activities:

- Western Nam Bo: 30 companies.
- Central Nam Bo: 5 Companies.
- Eastern Nam Bo: 2 companies (in Tay Ninh and Thu Dau Mot).

In 1957 the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee adopted the policy of using the armed units to carry out propaganda and support the political struggle by campaigning for the masses to participate in the revolution, kill tyrants, and capture weapons and supplies for the troops. However, it was necessary to preserve the political bases.



With the adoption of that policy there were launched a number of appropriately scaled attacks, such as the following:

-- On 10 August 1957 the forces of Thu Dau Mot carried out armed propaganda in the town of Minh Thanh, killing 20 tyrant policemen and capturing 40 weapons and 10 vehicles.

-- On 18 September 1957, the forces of Bien Hoa Province infiltrated the Trai Be lumbering camp to propagandize among the workers. They killed tyrants and captured 30 weapons and a number of vehicles.

-- In October 1957 Unit 250, the first battalion-sized concentrated unit of the revolutionary armed forces of Eastern Nam Bo, was formed in the old War Zone D base area.

The maturation of the armed forces and the armed struggle signified and extremely important transformation in the development of our people's revolutionary struggle in the South.

31 October to 7 December: Our Party delegation, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, visits Moscow.

The delegation participated in the ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution and in the Congress of Delegates of Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries (14 to 16 November) and the Congress of Delegates of Communist and Workers' Parties of the World (16 to 19 November).

With regard to Vietnam, the documents of those conferences helped us further illuminate our country's revolutionary path. The special session of the Party Central Committee which met at the end of December 1957 decided that the entire Party had to study those documents. Loyal to Marxism-Leninism, our Party always manifested a spirit of creativity in its line of constructing socialism in the North and struggling to achieve national unification.

November 1957: Formation of the First Coalition Government in Laos.

Since the end of 1954, when the Pathet Lao armed forces regrouped in San Nua and Phong Saly provinces and set up a revolutionary administration in those two provinces, the rightist Laotian army launched many attacks on the Pathet Lao regroupment areas, but all of them were repulsed.

In December 1956 Prince Souvanna Phouma, Premier of the government of the Kingdom of Laos, and Prince Souphavoung, representative of the Pathet Lao Fighting Forces, signed a Joint Declaration stipulating the formation of a Coalition Government which included the participation of the Pathet Lao.

On 2 November 1957 the delegation of the government of the Kingdom of Laos and the delegation of the Pathet Lao Fighting Forces signed an agreement regarding the formation of a Coalition Government and the integration of the Pathet Lao Forces into the national army, and an agreement on the organization of the royal administration in the provinces of San Nua and Phong Saly.



On 19 November 1957, the National Assembly of Laos approved a list of members of the Coalition Government. Prince Sovanna Phouma was to serve as Premier and the Pathet Lao would head two ministries: Prince Souphanouvong was named Minister of Economics and Planning, and Phumi Vongvichit was named Minister of Rites.

On 8 December 1957 and 18 December 1957, in Sam Nua and Phong Saly the Pathet Lao held ceremonies to turn over those two provinces to the government of the Kingdom of Laos.

On 15 December 1957 two Pathet Lao battalions went to the Plaine des Jarres to be integrated into the army of the Kingdom of Laos.

In the supplementary general election held in May 1958 the Pathet Lao won nine seats in the Laotian National Assembly.

The revolutionary situation continued to undergo complicated changes because of the plots and strategy of the U.S. imperialists in Southeast Asia and the Indochinese Peninsula.

As in South Vietnam, the U.S. and their lackeys endeavored to sabotage the Geneva Agreements, observing only the articles advantageous to them and giving in only when confronted by the strength of the mass struggle.

1958

Mid-1958: Formation of the Eastern Nam Bo Command.

Building on the results attained in 1957, in mid-1958 the Nam Bo Interszone Party Committee decided to form an Eastern Nam Bo Command (later changed to the Regional Military Committee) and to concentrate some of the forces of the eastern Nam Bo provinces and organize them into four companies directly under the Eastern Nam Bo Command (three infantry companies, each with 75 to 100 men, and a sapper company with 65 men).

In Tay Ninh Province, the base of the Interszone Party Committee, there was formed and enlarged company which was designated C.1000.

The Interszone Party Committee decided to create two revolutionary base areas: a base northwest of Saigon -- Zone B -- in Duong Minh Chau District, Tay Ninh Province, and a base northeast of Saigon -- Zone A -- extending from Ma Da to Bu Champ, Thu Dau Mot Province.

The formation of the Eastern Nam Bo Command had an important significance in that it helped the Interszone Party Committee unify and centralize its leadership and guidance of the armed forces of Nam Bo and prepare to advance to armed struggle.

At the end of 1958 the Regional Military Committee restored an arsenal to produce mines.

Operationally, attacks were launched on enemy outposts, combined with large-scale ambushes of reinforcements. For example:

-- On 10 August 1958 the enlarged company of Tay Ninh Province attacked the Dau Tien district capital, killing 200, capturing 30, and capturing more than 200 automatic weapons. It then repulsed an enemy battalion sent to reinforce Dau Tieng.

-- On 20 October 1958 the sapper company attacked the U.S. MAAG headquarters at Bien Hoa, killing or wounding 19.

Summer of 1958: Interzone Party Committee of Interzone 5 issues resolution on the creation of revolutionary base areas and the initial building up of armed forces.

Since the beginning of 1956 the Interzone Party Committee, taking advantage of the enemy's preoccupation with attacking the lowland areas and building on the spirit of Vietnamese-Montagnard solidarity during the anti-French resistance war period, had pursued the policy of campaigning for the masses to oppose the enemy's setting up of puppet villages and to maintain mastership in the mountain region.

In the summer of 1958, assimilating the experiences of Nam Bo and fully understanding the resolutions of the Party Central Committee and the document "The Revolutionary Line in the South" by comrade Le Duan, the Interzone Party Committee set forth the missions of developing the western parts of the lowland provinces in Interzone 5 and the Central Highlands into a revolutionary base area and beginning to build up armed and semi-armed forces in the mountain region, with the missions of self-defense, protection of the bases, and protection of the cadres.

"It is necessary to consolidate the existing armed and semi-armed forces and create base area to serve as sources of support, while also creating strong mass bases in order to fulfill the fundamental conditions for maintaining and developing the armed forces. The organization of self-defense forces among the masses is intended to protect the mass struggles and rescue cadres when necessary."

"Having reviewed the situation in the Interzone and recently gained experience in Nam Bo, we can combine limited armed struggle with political struggle .... We must know how to combine self-defense armed struggle or limited armed struggle under certain circumstances and to a certain degree, with the objectives of restricting fascism and expanding our political base ....

"At present, the enemy are far along the path of fascism. We cannot rely solely on political struggle but must use limited armed struggle coordinated with political struggle in order to annihilate the Americans, give rise to a spirit of nationalism and an anti-U.S. movement, and wipe out the reactionaries, in order to win over the fence-sitters, wipe out the big shots to shake up the underlings, and wipe out the commandoes to expand our activity. In general, our goals are to restrict fascism, lessen the enemy's prestige increase the prestige of the movement, and expand our political base.

"In the jungle-and-mountain areas, where the terrain is favorable and there are conditions for creating bases, we can engage in guerrilla activities combined with the expansion of activities in the midlands and in cooperation with armed activities in Nam Bo in order to destabilize the enemy's situation, exert a very great

effect on the common movement, and cause the political situation to develop in our favor."

The summer-fall 1958 resolution of the Interzone Party Committee of Interzone 5 created an important transformation in the Interzone's mountain region. Starting with miscellaneous self-defense activities of a spontaneous nature on the part of the masses, we began to form armed forces organizations to fulfill the mission of supporting the political struggle and self-defense armed struggle under the centralized leadership of the Party.

Therefore, after the issuance of the Resolution of the 15th Central Committee Plenum, the mass uprising and armed uprising in the Central Highlands and in a number of places in the lowlands spread rapidly and attacks were launched against the enemy all over the South.

1958: Uprising of the people in Bac Ai District, Ninh Thuan Province.

Bac Ai, a district in the mountain region of Ninh Thuan Province, was the home area of the hero Bi Nang Tac and an old base area during the anti-French resistance war. Therefore, in the "denounce communism" campaign and the campaign to herd the people into resettlement areas it was one of the enemy's main targets in the southernmost part of Trung Bo.

In October 1957 the enemy moved 2,500 people from 7 villages in eastern Bac Ai to the Bo Rao resettlement area, and moved 2,000 people from western Bac Ai to the Tam Ngan resettlement area. When the people resisted, the enemy had to carry out sweeping operations and set up outposts to control the population.

But in 1958 during two nights the people in the Bo Rao resettlement area abandoned it and returned to their old villages, and at the end of 1958 the people in the Tam Ngan resettlement area, unable to live in the resettlement area, also returned to their old villages.

The disintegration of the Bo Rao and Tam Ngan resettlement areas in Bac Ai District resulted from a fierce mass uprising against enemy control, from a combination of politics and military proselytizing, under the leadership of revolutionary cadres.

The struggle of the masses to destroy the resettlement areas lasted throughout 1959 and 1960. In 1959 the enemy mobilized six battalions to quell it, but they were defeated. In October 1960 those two resettlement areas were completely destroyed in a region-wide uprising in which the armed forces coordinated with the people to destroy outposts, annihilate the enemy, force the enemy to withdraw from many outposts, and liberate the mountain region.

The popular uprising in Bac Ai was in fact a local uprising to destroy the enemy's control and maintain mastership by means of the political strength of the masses and their self-defense armed struggle. It had the significance of stimulating abroad uprising movement of the masses in Interzone 5 and the simultaneous uprising movement in the future.

19 April: Formation of the chemical arm of the Vietnam People's Army.

Implementing the Resolution of the 12th Central Committee Plenum on building a professional, modern army with many combat arms and armed forces branches, the formation of the chemical arm of the Vietnam People's Army was an inevitable development.

In the phase of preparing to form the combat arm -- in 1956 -- we set up a team at the Vietnam Infantry Officers School to study combat under the conditions of nuclear and chemical weapons, and in March 1956 the first chemical officers training course was begun at the Infantry Officers School.

On 19 April 1958 the Ministry of National Defense issued Resolution No. 098, which set up the Chemical Bureau of the Combat Training Department of the Military Training General Department, the principal mission of which was to help the Military Training General Department guide the prevention of, and opposition to, chemical and nuclear warfare and build up the chemical arm. April 19, 1958 is regarded as the date of the founding of our army's chemical arm. Later the Chemical Bureau developed into the Chemical Department, directly under the General Staff. Chemical staff organs and chemical detachments were gradually organized throughout the army and were equipped with increasingly advanced modern equipment.

During the fight against the war of destruction waged by the air force of the U.S. imperialists, the chemical troops cleverly used smokescreens to camouflage and protect the important targets, and effectively opposed the enemy's insidious plots to attack us with many modern weapons.

On the southern battlefields, the chemical troops cooperated closely with the infantry and the other combat arms to defeat the enemy's scheme to attack us with chemical weapons, increased their offensive strength, and ensured the safety of our combat and transportation troops.

December 1958: Our people all over the country protest the U.S.-Diem massacre at Phu Loi.

In the South, the U.S. and Diem endeavored to maintain an extremely cruel fascist dictatorship. In addition to the very violent "denounce communists" campaigns in the rural areas and cities, they mobilized divisions of regular troops to carry out large-scale, long-term clearing operations in many places, especially in the old resistance war base areas, which wrecked houses, burned rice and other crops, raped women, and tortured and killed people in a very barbarous manner. All over the South, the U.S.-Diem lackeys insanely sought revenge, robbed, extorted money, and arrested people without having to bring them to trial and without due process, and killed people haphazardly in the "it's better to kill innocent people than to overlook someone" manner.

At large system of concentration camps at the hamlet, village, province, and central levels were packed with cadres, Party members, revolutionary masses, and people of good will.



The Phu Loi prison in Thu Dau Mot Province, 33 kilometers from Saigon, had an extremely cruel prison regime intended to cause the cadres, Party members, and revolutionary masses there to die a slow death. The prisoners there, however, continued to resolutely maintain their indomitable will and always manifested a spirit of solidarity in struggle. Realizing that they could not weaken the will of patriots, the U.S.-Diem gang plotted to kill large numbers of them.

On 1 December 1958 they poisoned the food of 6,000 political prisoners in the camp. That day, more than 1,000 people who had been poisoned died a very horrible death. They fired into or sprayed with water survivors who sought help.

When they learned of that, our people all over the country were very moved and were seething with anger.

The Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front set up a Committee to Struggle Against the Phu Loi Massacre. In the North between 20 and 23 January 1959 nearly 500,000 people participated in demonstrations protesting the U.S.-Diem massacre. In Hanoi, 297,000 people participated in 412 protest rallies.

The people in the south, including some soldiers in Diem's army, were extremely angry over the insane act of the U.S.-Diem gang in Phu Loi. People went to the Phu Loi prison camp demanding to save the victims. The relatives of the survivors in the prison camp went on a hunger strike to protest the Ngo Dinh Diem gang and demand that the survivors be given emergency treatment.

In the southern provinces, especially in Nam Bo, there broke out many struggles to expose the U.S.-Diem crime at Phu Loi. All pagodas and churches in Ben Tre held services to pray for the revolutionary warriors killed at Phu Loi.

The nationwide struggle to protest the Phu Loi massacre and expose the U.S.-Diem crimes lasted until March 1959.

1959

March 1959: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee issues a directive on the mission of creating a revolutionary base in the Central Highlands.

The Political Bureau determined that the Central Highlands (including the mountainous areas of Interzone 5 and the jungle-and mountains area of northeast Nam Bo) occupied a very important strategic position with regard to both the enemy and ourselves.

The U.S. and Diem were endeavoring to develop the Central Highlands into a mobile military base center in the South. Faced with the world revolutionary movement, the growing strength of the North, and the revolutionary movement in the South, they were increasingly determined to hold onto the Central Highlands but had many major weaknesses. The most basic weakness was the contradiction between the U.S.-Diem gang and the ethnic minority peoples. The local reactionary forces -- the source of support of the U.S.-Diem gang -- were still weak and small in numbers, so it would be difficult for them to control the people.

The ethnic consciousness of the ethnic minority groups became stronger and progress was made in achieving solidarity among them. The revolutionary bases and the struggle movement developed relatively uniformly. The governmental administration belonged largely to the enemy, but we were endeavoring to win control of most of the hamlets and villages. Many places had double administrations (in form they belonged to the enemy but with regard to content they belonged to us). In places which did not yet have enemy administrations the people governed themselves in accordance with their customs. The people had a tradition of armed self-defense and took advantage of the rough terrain. Economically, the Central Highlands had latent capabilities and the people were experienced in self-sufficiency production. The influence of the Party and of President Ho Chi Minh was relatively deep and broad among the people. The Party exercised continuous leadership and the cadres sacrificed devotedly and remained close to the people. Those were basic advantages and were also the main conditions for building a revolutionary base. But we also had difficulties and weaknesses with regard to the level of understanding and the revolutionary experience of the people, with regard to economics, with regard to the number and quality of cadres, etc.

The Political Bureau set forth the mission of "endeavoring to develop the Central Highlands into the main revolutionary base in the South," while also positively defeating the U.S.-Diem plan to construct a base complex and create a strong position in the South, advancing to attacking the enemy, and contributing positively to defending the North.

The Political Bureau directive stressed the contents of base development included many aspects: politics (civilian many proselyting, ethnic solidarity, and the construction of our political administration base), self-sufficiency economics, the building up of revolutionary armed forces, and campaigning among enemy soldiers. All tasks would be led by the Party, so it would be necessary to step up the Party building work and oppose purely military thoughts while also being on guard against the style of spreading out guidance evenly without focusing on the key tasks in each period of time, in order to promote the building and consolidation of bases.

The Political Bureau pointed out that the present goals of the development and use of armed forces were to help the political struggle advance to the carrying out of limited guerrilla warfare, threatening the enemy, and expanding our status of initiative. The long-range goals were to strengthen the revolutionary forces and prepare objective conditions for advancing to the overthrow of the U.S.-Diem clique, and become the main force in defending the revolutionary administration in the future. Therefore, in providing guidance it was necessary to stress the development of armed forces, for only with strong armed forces could we defend the bases and advance the revolution.

May 1959: The Party Central Committee holds its 15th Plenum.

The plenum reviewed the situation in our country since the signing of the Geneva Agreements and set forth the revolutionary lines of the nation as a whole and for the South.

The plenum analyzed the characteristics of the situation and determined that the basic missions of the revolution in the South were to "Liberate the South from the ruling yoke of the imperialists and feudalists, achieve national independence and land reform, complete the people's democratic national revolution in the South, and build a Vietnam that is peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong."

The resolution affirmed that "The basic path of development of the revolution in the South is to use violence, and that according to the specific situation and present requirements of the revolution the line of using violence is using the strength of the masses and relying principally on the political forces of the masses, in combination with armed forces to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the situation, in order to overthrow the rule of the imperialists and colonialists and set up a revolutionary regime of the people.

"In order to attain those objectives it is necessary to have a long, arduous, and heroic struggle process and positively consolidate and meticulously develop forces, for only then could there be conditions for taking advantage of favorable opportunities and winning ultimate victory."

With regard to the form of struggle, the resolution presented the following analysis: "In that process of difficult, arduous, and complicated struggle the political struggle form is the principal form, but because the enemy forces are determined to submerge the revolution in blood and flames, and due to the needs of the revolutionary movement in the South, to a certain extent there will be formed self-defense and armed propaganda forces in order to support the political struggle. However, when using self-defense forces and armed propaganda forces it is necessary to thoroughly understand the principle of serving the political struggle and obeying the political struggle.

"But because the U.S. imperialists are the most belligerent imperialists, under such conditions the uprising of the people in the south is capable of becoming a protracted armed struggle."

The 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was an extremely important milestone in the development of the situation and met the ardent aspirations of the revolutionary masses. The plenum not only set forth the principle-like line of the revolution in the South but also established a basis on which to advance to setting forth accurate and comprehensive strategic missions.

The Resolution of the plenum strongly mobilized the revolutionary spirit of the people, further strengthened unanimity in the Party toward the revolutionary line in the South and created a fundamental transformation and great leap forward in the revolutionary movement in the South in 1959 and 1960, the high point of which was the simultaneous uprising movement.

May 1959: Formation of Group 559.

At the end of May 1959, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee issued a Resolution officially setting up Group 559, which had the missions of, along with the liaison route of the Unification Committee, creating the first foot-travel route connecting the North and South, and organizing the sending of people,

weapons, and supplies to the revolution in the South, first of all to Interzone 5.

During 16 years of operation Group 559, which at first had only a few hundred people who primarily used cargo bicycles on narrow trails, became a force with many components: transportation troops, military engineers, infantry, anti-aircraft artillery, POL troops, communications units, etc., totalling tens of thousands of people and thousands of cargo trucks organized into many divisions, regiments, troop encampments, workshops, stations, etc. There was created a strategic route bearing the name of the great Uncle Ho which crossed the Truong Son mountains, connected the battlefields, and amounted to a relatively complete land route, pipeline, and river route network.

Group 559 personnel, also called the Truong Son troops, primarily used mechanized transportation facilities supplemented by nonmechanized transportation facilities and effectively served the sending of supplies to many battlefields and to many large campaigns of the armed forces, transported hundreds of thousands of people south and north, and transported millions of tons of cargo despite fierce bombing and land attacks by the enemy troops.

During the General Offensive and Uprising of the spring of 1975, Group 559 rapidly organized the transporting of large corps, transported a large volume of material-technical supplies to the battlefield and, especially, ensured that the strategic corps moved with marvellous rapidity and promptly participated in the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign.

During a conference held to recapitulate the Group's work in 1966 and 1967, Senior General Vo Nguyen Giap sent a letter of commendation to the Group's cadres and men and encouraged them to endeavor to become:

- A very skilled strategic rear services army.
- A very skilled fighting army.
- A very skilled production army.
- An international army very skilled at helping our friends.

Of those missions, the strategic rear services mission was the most important.

Comrade Le Duan, when visiting Group 559, said: "The Truong Son route is a brilliant feat of arms in the history of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war.

"The Truong Son route is also a route which expresses determination to win, bravery, and a heroic spirit. It is a route which connects North and South, unifies the nation, and is a route to our homeland's rich future.

The heroic Truong Son troops fought and won on the route bearing the name of the great Uncle Ho."



Group 559 brilliantly fulfilled the missions assigned to it by the upper echelon. On 31 May 1976 the Group was awarded the Hero of the People's Armed Forces designation by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Fifty-five units and 34 cadres and men of the Group were awarded the glorious Hero of the People's Armed Forces designation.

July 1959: Formation of Group 759.

In order to positively aid the struggle in the South, in addition to organizing Group 559 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee concluded that it was necessary to organize a maritime route to transport weapons, ammunition, and equipment to the South.

In July 1959 the Ministry of National Defense decided to set up Group 759, which at first was only a group of cadres directly under the General Staff who were assigned the mission of studying that matter.

At the beginning of 1961 the Political Bureau directed that the Nam Bo coastal provinces send boat units to the North to obtain weapons and exchange experiences regarding the sea route to the South.

In June 1961 a motorized four-ton-capacity boat from Ben Tre Province was the first boat to arrive in the North. It was followed by boats from Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, and other province.

On 14 September 1962, Group 759's ship Phuong Dong 1 set out on the first trip to Ca Mau and reached its destination safely.

During the first 10 months, five ships with capacities of 50 to 60 tons made 21 trips to the coastal provinces of the South.

By the end of 1964, Group 759 had dozens of steel ships with capacities of 50 to 100 tons and relatively modern equipment. The Ministry of National Defense decided to place Group 759 under the direct control of the Naval Command and change its designation to Group 125. The Group not only transported cargo to Nam Bo but even transported weapons to the coastal provinces of southern Trung Bo.

In February 1965 the enemy discovered us at Vung Ro in Phu Yen Province. By that time we had transported nearly 5,000 tons of weapons to the South, mostly to Nam Bo.

The U.S. and its puppets strengthened their naval forces and air forces in order to tightly patrol the southern coast, after which the transporting of cargo became very arduous and fierce. However, Group 125 continued to come up with innovations, overcame difficulties, and continued to do its work. At times it had to take a very round-about way, following international shipping routes to Indonesia or Singapore and then heading toward the South.

During its 13 years of operations, (1962-1975), the maritime transportation unit contributed importantly to the development, combat, and victory of our soldiers

and people in the South. Its prompt service to the Binh Gia campaign at the end of 1964 had a very important significance.

20 July 1959: "Vietnam Day," a strong manifestation of the spirit of Asian-African solidarity in opposing the U.S.

The Asian-African People's Solidarity Council, meeting in Cairo, appealed for the Asian-African Solidarity Committee and all peace-loving people of the world to make 20 July 1959 "Vietnam Day," to demand that the U.S. withdraw from South Vietnam, that it abandon its military bases in South Vietnam, that negotiations be held between North and South Vietnam to organize free nationwide elections, that the regime in the South immediately end all acts which harmed the people and abolish all fascist laws, etc.

On 20 July 1959 the first "Vietnam Day" was solemnly observed by organizations in more than 20 countries. For many years thereafter "Vietnam Day" was observed in many countries on 20 July to support our people's resistance to aggression by the U.S. imperialists.

"Vietnam Day" had a fine, important significance. It was a manifestation of the sincere solidarity and ardent support of the Asian-African people for our people, who were struggling to achieve national unification. It increasingly demonstrated that the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence and unification was integrally related to the national independence and peace preservation movement of the people of Asia, Africa, and the world. It also caused our people to be increasingly confident in the inevitable success of their revolutionary undertaking.

September 1959: Formation of Group 959.

In 1959, because of the revolutionary situation and missions in Laos, the Central Committee of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party and the Central Committee of the Laotian People's Revolutionary Party, on the basis of close, loyal cooperation and solidarity in combat against the common enemy and aggression, for the independence and freedom of the Vietnamese and Laotian people, and combining true patriotism with pure proletarian internationalism, agreed to organize a delegation of Vietnamese military specialists to work side-by-side with the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army.

In September 1959, Group 959 was set up and was assigned the mission of serving as specialists for the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army, and organizing the supplying of Vietnamese material to the Laotian revolution and directly commanding the Vietnamese volunteer units operating in the Sam Nua, Xieng Kheang, and Vientiane.

After 14 years of activity, following the Vientiane Agreement in 1973, Group 959 terminated its mission. Group 959, which had the confidence of the Military Commission and Supreme Command of the Laotian People's Liberation Army, and the heartfelt support of the cadres and men of the Laotian revolutionary armed forces, fulfilled its mission well. The Vietnamese military specialists and volunteer troops, along with the fraternal Laotian revolutionary armed forces, defeated the

counterrevolutionary armed forces, advanced to liberating all of Laos, contributed positively to consolidating the rare exemplary solidarity between the people and armed forces of Vietnam and Laos, and contributed to furthering the favorable development of the revolutionary war in our country.

1959: The Tra Bong uprising and our people's uprising movement in the South at the end of 1959.

Although the resolution of the 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee was not disseminated to the provinces in Nam Bo and Interzone 5 until December 1959, our Party organizations and people in the South quickly and skilfully accepted, and transformed into revolutionary activity, the spirit of changing the status of the revolution step-by-step on the part of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau.

Many localities in the South armed themselves for self-defense, organized defenses, combined political struggle with military struggle, broke up the population concentration zones, and opposed the enemy's sweeping and population resettlement operations. Most outstanding among them was the uprising in Tra Bong, a mountain-region district in the western part of Quang Ngai Province, during the last months of 1959.

By mid-1959, Tra Bong had Party organizations at the base and district levels, had strong political power, had extensive self-defense and guerrilla forces, had local troops, was experienced in legal and illegal political struggle, and had readied a plan for the uprising.

On 28 August 1959, 16,000 ethnic minority people in Tra Bong District, taking advantage of the boycott of the puppet National Assembly elections of the U.S.-Diem clique, under the timely leadership of the District Party Committee and the Provincial Party Committee, and with the support of the province's 339th Platoon, arose and eliminated the puppet administrations in 16 villages, forced the abandonment of 7 posts, killed 161 of the enemy, punished 61 puppet tyrants and bullies, set up revolutionary administrations in the hamlets and villages, and eliminated the tyrants in all 6 lowland villages. In the entire district, there remained only one post in the district seat, which was surrounded, and the district chief and his deputy fled to the provincial capital.

The popular uprising, with its strong spirit, quickly spread to a number of neighboring villages in the district of Son Tra, Ba To, and Minh Long.

The enemy resisted fiercely by launching sweeping operations combined with an economic blockade. But under the close guidance of the Interzone Party Committee and the Provincial Party Committee, and with the aid of the surrounding districts in Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces and the provincial and interzone armed forces, Tra Bong continued to hold and expand a base area connecting with the nearby districts.

The Tra Bong uprising was regarded as one of the first local uprisings in the transition phase of the revolution in the south in late 1959. It had the effect of furthering the strong advance of the common movement.



There were uprisings in other localities during that period, such as the following:

-- The people of the villages of Ta Loc, Ta Let, and Ha Ri in Vinh Thach District (western Binh Dinh Province), led by Party cadres, struggled against the enemy's population resettlement activities. In February 1959 they entered the jungle to openly oppose the enemy, organized self-defense forces, many times defeated enemy sweeping operations, and maintained the movement. In 1960 the movement spread throughout the district. Building on the victory in Vinh Thach, the people expanded the base area to four districts in the province and organized many guerrilla units.

-- The people in the Tho Lo area of Van Canh District in western Phu Yen Province opposed the enemy continuously throughout 1957 and prevented them from concentrating the people and setting up hamlets. In May 1959 our people openly killed tyrants and bullies. In September 1959 we organized a local platoon, created a liberated area connecting seven villages in Tuy Hoa 1 District, often attacked the enemy when they were setting up posts or conducting sweeping operations, and maintained and expanded the movement until in 1961, the entire mountain area of Phu Yen Province was liberated.

-- The base area in the Central Highlands was maintained. Gia Lai, Cong Tum, and Dac Lac provinces each had one or two dissident platoons which openly opposed the enemy. For example, in November 1959 the people of Ta Booc Village in Dac Pet District, Cong Tum Province, killed a First Lieutenant and four soldiers who entered the village to conscript laborers, then burned down their village and went to live in the jungle. The guerrillas of village A3 in District 7, Gia Lai Province, wiped out an enemy reconnaissance squad disguised as a team spraying DDT to eliminate malaria, killing 7 and capturing 7 weapons.

In Nam Bo, since October 1959 the people in a number of old resistance war areas put up armed resistance against sweeping operations, arose to destroy the "agrovilles" destroyed the enemy's control, and disintegrated the enemy's base-level administration. Especially, the uprising of the people in the districts of Chon Thanh, Duong Minh Chau, and Ben Cau killed tyrants and destroyed the enemy's control between August and October 1959. The provinces of Kien Tuong and Kien Phong built up rather strong armed forces and in October 1959 repulsed a sweeping operation launched by a division in the Quang Cung area, killing many of the enemy and capturing more than 100 weapons. The echo of that battle reverberated all over the Nam Bo province.

5 October 1959: Formation of the armored arm of the Vietnam People's Army.

Implementing the Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee regarding the gradual development of the People's Army to a professional, modern status with a full complement of armed forces branches and combat arms, the armored arm was formed and became one of our army's modern technical combat arms.

October 5th, 1959, the day on which the first tank regiment was formed, is the combat arm's anniversary date.



On 24 January 1968, Battalion 198 of the 203d Regiment, representing the entire combat arm, participated in combat for the first time in a battle to wipe out the Ta May strongpoint on Route 9. In that battle, which opened the way to the Lang Vay strong point, the unit outstandingly fulfilled its mission. With a spirit of "we must win a victory in the very first battle; even if there is only one tank left we must be determined to fight; even if there is only one person left we must be determined to fight; fight even in daytime; fight until we win victory," under very difficult circumstances during the assault, one of the battalion's companies bravely passed through the breach and wrought havoc inside the camp, thus creating favorable conditions for the infantry to fulfill their mission in the battle. Soon thereafter, on 7 February 1968, Battalion 198 won a resounding victory in the battle to wipe out the Lang Vay strongpoint.

During following years, in the Route 9-Southern Laos campaign in 1971 and in the strategic offensive of 1972, on the battlefields of the South as well as on the battlefields of Laos and Kampuchea, the armor combat arm continually developed its combat tradition and fulfilled all missions assigned to it by the upper echelon.

During the General Offensive and Uprising of 1975 the armored units continued importantly to the victories of the Central Highlands and Hue-Da Nang campaigns, and on 30 April 1975 two tanks -- No. 390 and No. 843 -- led the 203d Brigade in the II Corps formation and in a bold, rapid penetration to the puppet administration's Presidential Palace in Saigon. Bui Quang Than, a tank company commander, lowered the "three stripes" flag of the puppet administration and had the honor of raising the flag of the revolution, signifying the total victory of the Ho Chi Minh campaign.

On 20 October 1976 the armor combat arm was awarded the designation Hero of the People's Armed Forces by the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. With its glorious tradition of "Winning victory in all battles," it smashed the enemy's resistance when it entered the battle, along with the infantry wipe out the enemy and mastered the battlefield, and contributed worthily to the total victory of our people and armed forces in the war against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

1959: The first Laotian Coalition Government Collapses.

The basic plot of the U.S. imperialists was to annex Indochina and implement their neocolonial policy. Therefore, they had to find a way to attack and liquidate the revolutionary accomplishments achieved by the Laotian people in the anti-French resistance war.

On 11 May 1959 the Government of the Kingdom of Laos ordered that the two Pathet Lao battalions in the Plaine des Jarres be surrounded, and that they lay down their arms within 24 hours.

During the night of 18 May 1959, Pathet Lao battalion No. 2 withdrew from the Plaine des Jarres to its base area. On 12 June 1959, the battalion issued a declaration which clearly expressed its determination to protect the people, and on 1 July 1959 it issued a declaration to the people of the entire nation regarding U.S. intervention in Laos and appealed for the people to unite in struggling for the correct implementation of the Geneva Agreement on Laos.

On 23 July 1959, the government of Phui Samanikon ordered the arrest of the Pathet Lao leaders who were present in Vientiane, including Prince Souphanouvong and issued a communique which stated that those comrades would be tried for serious crimes.

Prior to that, at the beginning of 1959, when the rightist army was continuously violating our country's border in the Huong Lap area, the Laotian reactionaries many times falsely accused the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of concentrating troops along the Vietnam-Laos border. They also declared a state of emergency in five provinces bordering Vietnam and sent reinforcements to Sam Nua Province. Those were enemy plots of long standing.

Because of the U.S. plots and the traitorous acts of the reactionary Laotian lackeys, the first Laotian Coalition Government collapsed and the Laotian people had to arise and carry out a protracted struggle in order to win victory.

1960.

1 January: Promulgation of the first socialist constitution in our country.

Following the victory of the resistance war against the French colonialist aggressors, the completely liberated North changed over to the phase of socialist revolution. The constitution of 1946, our country's first democratic constitution, was no longer appropriate. On 23 January 1957 our country's National Assembly decided to amend the constitution and set up a Constitution Amendment Commission headed by President Ho Chi Minh. In July 1958 the first draft was submitted for discussion by cadres at the various levels and among the people. Many opinions were solicited, even from our compatriots in the South and Vietnamese living abroad.

On 31 December 1959 the new constitution was approved by the 11th Session of the First National Assembly.

On 1 January 1960, President Ho Chi Minh signed an order officially promulgating the new constitution, the first socialist constitution in our country.

The nature of the state, the basic concern of the constitution, was stated explicitly in the preamble to the constitution: "Our state is a popular democratic state which is based on the worker-peasant alliance and is led by the working class." Article 1 of the constitution stipulates that "Vietnam is an integral whole encompassing both the North and the South and is indivisible."

The new constitution determined that the path of development of the revolution in the North would be as follows: "The Democratic Republic of Vietnam will gradually advance from a people's democracy regime to socialism, and will transform its backward economy into a socialist economy with modern agriculture and industry and advanced science and technology."

The new constitution, which expressed the superior nature of the political system of the Vietnamese state, delineated the objectives in order to mobilize the people all over the country to endeavor to win victory in the new phase of the revolution.

President Ho Chi Minh said, "Our new constitution has further encourages the people of the North to compete in socialist construction and encourages the people in the South to struggle persistently for freedom, democracy, and national unification."

17 January: The simultaneous uprising in Ben Tre and in many other Nam Bo and Central Highlands province.

During the last months of 1959 and the first months of 1960, due to the seething revolutionary situation and the guidance of the resolution of the 15th Party Central Committee Plenum, the Party committee echelons in the South rapidly re-oriented their struggle motto, launched a high tide of mass uprisings with the positive support of the armed forces, and shifted the revolutionary movement in the South over to an offensive status to win mastership in the rural areas.

Our people arose in a number of provinces in Nam Bo and the Central Highlands, and in the mountainous areas of the lowland areas of Interzone 5. They amounted to a great revolutionary uprising which signified the beginning of a serious, tangled political crisis of the U.S.-Diem regime and also began the period in which the revolution would change over to an offensive posture all over the South. An uprising of an exemplary nature was the simultaneous uprising of the people in Ben Tre Province, where uprising masses created extremely rich struggle forms in the spirit of emphasizing politics, the use of arms as a key factor, and the maintenance of the masses' legal status.

Beginning on 17 January 1960, within a short period of time the districts of Mo Cay, Minh Tan, and Thanh Phu, under the leadership of the local Party organizations, simultaneously arose to shatter or paralyze the enemy's hamlet and village governmental administrations, set up People's Self-Government Committees, confiscated the land of cruel landlords and divided it up among the poor peasants, and organized and developed their armed forces to oppose the enemy's counterattacks and maintain the people's mastership right.

The simultaneous uprising movement rapidly spread to many province in Nam Bo and the Central Highlands, and in the western parts of the lowland Interzone 5 provinces. The revolution gained control in a vast, strategically important area which connected the Central Highlands with the eastern and western Nam Bo areas and the provinces of the Interzone 5 lowlands, and also encouraged the masses in the cities and municipalities, especially in Saigon-Cho Lon, to launch strong struggles. In addition to smashing the control system of the puppet tyrants, the masses set up their own self-government, administrations and armed forces. Many militia, guerrilla, self-defense, and local provincial and district units were developed very rapidly. Arming the masses and creating and developing concentrated units became urgent requirements of the movement to develop the offensive and resist the enemy's counterattacks.



The simultaneous uprising movement transformed the revolution in the South from a status of conserving forces to a status of strong, continuous offensives, and gave rise to a revolutionary high tide of armed uprisings by the masses in vast rural areas.

"That revolutionary high tide is in fact an uprising movement of the masses, local, step-by-step uprisings of the people's revolutionary movement to win political power, create people's revolutionary administrations in the hamlets and villages, and create the initial organizations of the People's Army in the villages, districts, and provinces." (Letter from comrade Le Duan to the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee, 28 April 1961.)

Therefore, the simultaneous uprising was an initial, very basic victory in our people's protracted struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

With the simultaneous uprising movement, our Party learned many great lessons regarding revolutionary guidance, such as the correct evaluation of the enemy and ourselves, full comprehension of the viewpoint of violence, the concept of strategic offensive, the application of the art of guiding armed uprisings, etc.

26 January: The Tua Hai battle, one of the first large battles of the revolutionary armed forces in the South.

At the beginning of 1960, the Nam Bo Interzone Party Committee adopted the policy to fighting a large annihilating battle to further the common movement, support the masses in arising to kill the tyrants and destroy the control apparatus, liberate the countryside, and capture weapons from the enemy with which to equip the revolutionary armed forces.

The Military Committee of the South selected as its objective Tua Hai, the base of the 7th Regiment of the enemy's 5th Division, 7 kilometers from the city of Tay Ninh. The Interzone Party Committee approved that decision.

Although we had only a small force we selected Tua Hai, a large base, as our objective, for we fully understood the enemy's situation, had activists in the enemy's ranks, and persuaded a number of enemy soldiers to be sympathetic and not oppose the revolution.

Our forces consisted of three infantry companies and a sapper company under the direct command of the Regional Military Committee. We combined a surprise attack with military proselytizing and sent a sapper force inside before opening fire.

The time of the attack was the night of 26 January 1960, i.e. The night of the 27th and the early morning of the 28th of the lunar Tet month, a time when the enemy was very careless.

Because we fully grasped the situation, made careful preparations, and had an accurate plan, after only 20 minutes of fighting our troops completely mastered the Tua Hai base, killing or wounding 400 of the enemy. More than 1,000 enemy officers and enlisted men surrendered and we destroyed a 105 mm artillery battalion and a battalion of light tanks and captured more than 5,000 weapons and three trucks loaded with ammunition.



The battle of Tua Hai, one of the first large battles of the revolutionary armed forces in the South, resulted in the annihilation of many of the enemy and the capture of a large number of the enemy. It was also the battle which began the period of political struggle combined with armed struggle in eastern Nam Bo.

1 March: First population census in the North.

In order to serve the mission of constructing socialism in the North and meet the requirements of strengthening national defense and aiding the revolutionary war to liberate the South, in 1960 our Party and government decided to carry out the first population census in the North.

According to the census, as of 1 March 1960, the 32 provinces, municipalities, and zones directly under the central echelon in the North had a total population of 15,916,955, including 7,687,814 men and 8,229,141 women. The most populous province was Thanh Hoa, with 1,598,261 people.

It was very important that we have accurate knowledge of our population. It helped the Party and government have a solid basis on which to draft plans to develop the economy, strengthen national defense, and resolve problems regarding policies, culture, and society in the enterprise of constructing socialism and defending the nation.

April 196 : Promulgation of the Military Obligation Law.

Beginning with the formation of our army, and throughout the anti-French resistance war, troop recruitment had been voluntary and based on the voluntary spirit of all patriotic citizens.

"Our former way of doing things was thus completely necessary and rational."

Now, "the situation has changed, peace has been restored, the North has been liberated and has begun to be consolidated, and the land reform has essentially been completed. In view of that situation, the system of voluntary enlistment must be replaced with a system of obligatory military service." (Report of the Political Bureau of the 12th Party Central Committee Plenum.)

After a period of study, at the end of 1957 the Council of Ministers assigned to the Ministry of National Defense, in coordination with the relevant organs, organize test points regarding the application of the obligatory military service system in Vinh Phuc Province.

-- In 1958, the test points were expanded to Hai Duong, Nghe An, and Ha Nam provinces, and to Phu Yen District in Son La Province.

-- In 1959, nearly all of the provinces in the North organized test points for the implementation of the obligatory military service system in one or two districts.

After being amended and supplemented after the trial applications, the Military Obligation Law was officially approved by the National Assembly of the Democratic

Republic of Vietnam. In April 1960, President Ho Chi Minh signed a decree promulgating that law.

"The implementation of the obligatory military service system increases the people's consciousness of national defense and enables all citizens to serve in the army and fulfill their obligations to defend the homeland." (Report of the Political Bureau at the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee.) By implementing the new obligatory military service it was possible to have a large powerful reserve force which has undergone training, while reducing the standing army and economizing on manpower and materiel in order to step up national construction. By implementing the new obligatory military service system it was possible to create favorable conditions for implementing the professional systems in the army and overcoming the irrationalities and limitations caused by the system of voluntary enlistment over a long period of time.

The promulgation and implementation of the Military Obligation Law contributed importantly to the task of mobilizing and recruiting troops in order to build up our armed forces and defeat the U.S. imperialists in both the South and the North.

8 May: Election of the Second National Assembly.

Due to the wartime conditions, the term of the First National Assembly was extended from 1946 to 1960.

The war had ended, the North had been completely liberated, the new constitution had been promulgated, and on 8 May 1960 97.52 percent of the voters in the North cast ballots to elect the Second National Assembly.

Some 362 people were elected as delegates to the National Assembly. The person receiving the most votes was President Ho Chi Minh, a candidate in Ba Dinh Ward, Hanoi, who received 99.91 percent of the votes. With regard to the composition of the delegates to the Second National Assembly, 65 were members of ethnic minority groups, 49 were women, 40 were youths between 21 and 30 years old, 46 were peasants, 20 were military personnel, 65 were engaged in scientific, artistic, or educational work, 2 were members of the national bourgeoisie, 3 were priests, and 2 were Buddhist priests.

During its first session the Second National Assembly elected:

-- President: comrade Ho Chi Minh.

-- Vice President: comrade Ton Duc Thang.

-- Chairman of the Standing Committee of National Assembly: comrade Truong Chinh.

-- Premier: comrade Pham Van Dong.

During that session the National Assembly also elected a National Defense Council and appointed the Director of the Supreme People's Organ of Control and the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court.

The perfecting and consolidating of the central legislative and executive organs, so that they could be appropriate to the requirements of the new situation and missions, strengthened the proletarian dictatorship state in order to construct and defend the socialist North, while also aiding the great front line in the South.

5 to 10 September: Third Congress of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party.

This was the first time -- after 30 years of arduous and heroic struggle -- that our Party had held a Congress in the capital of the homeland.

Participating in the Congress were 525 official delegates and 51 alternate delegates, who represented 500,000 Party members throughout the nation. Nearly 20 delegations of other communist parties also attended the Congress.

The Congress reviewed the work since the Second Party Congress (February 1951) and outlined a program for the revolutionary line for our country as a whole and the lines for the two regions. "The common missions of the Vietnamese revolution at the present time are strengthening national solidarity, resolutely struggling to maintain the peace, and promoting the socialist revolution in the North, while promoting the people's democratic national revolution in the South, achieving national unification on the basis of independence and democracy, building a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, rich, and strong Vietnam, truly contributing to strengthening the socialist bloc, and protecting peace in Southeast Asia and in the world.

The Congress decided to amend the Party Statutes and to elect a new Central Committee. The 1st Plenum of the Party Central Committee elected President Ho Chi Minh as Party Secretary and comrade Le Duan as First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, elected a Political Bureau consisting of 11 regular members and 2 alternate members, and elected a Party Central Committee Secretariat with 7 members.

The Third Party Congress was a very important event in the history of our country's revolution. On the basis of the development of the revolutionary situation in both parts of our country and common tendency of the world revolution. The Congress delineated an independent, autonomous, creative political line intended to promote the people's democratic national revolution in the South and the socialist revolution in the North, and develop the combined strength of the two great revolutions of the era in our country and abroad, in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

The Congress analyzed, and set forth in a scientific, creative manner, our country's two strategic revolutionary missions and the relationship between those two strategic missions, and outlined the prospect of inevitable victory for the revolution and the mode of operation for winning victory in each region.

The line delineated by the Congress illuminated the path for our people, who were constructing socialism and struggling to unify the homeland. The Congress signified a new maturation of our Party's leadership and served as the basis for all future victories.

20 October: Simultaneous uprisings by the ethnic minority people and armed forces in the Central Highlands.

In 1960, our people's uprising movement rapidly spread to nearly all provinces in Nam Bo and the western parts of the coastal provinces in Interzone 5.

In the Central Highlands, the simultaneous uprising began with the attack and uprising in Dac Ta, which gave rise to a revolutionary mass movement in all three Central Highlands province.

Dac Ta was located on strategic Rt. 14 north of Cong Tum. On 20 October 1960 the soldiers and people there simultaneously attacked the outposts at Dac Ru, Dac Lay, Dac Ta, Dac Bun, etc. When we wiped out the Dac Ru and Dac Lay posts, the enemy at Dac Ta fled in panic and the Dac Bun outpost surrendered. We killed or captured 300 of the enemy and captured 50 weapons. East of Cong Tum we attacked and wiped out the Mang But and Mang Len outposts and destroyed seven enemy vehicles on Rt. 5. At the same time, the people in Gia Lai attacked and wiped out the Kanak outpost (near An Khe) and the Le Thanh outpost in Gia Lai. In Dac Lac took the Play Coc and Ai Nu posts to support the uprising and struggle of our compatriots in Buon Ma Thuot. In addition to the military attacks, our people arose to destroy a large part of the enemy's base-level administrative network. We gained control of a vast, strategically important area which connected the Central Highlands with eastern and western Nam Bo and extending from the Central Highlands to the Interzone 5 lowlands.

2 November to 6 December: Our Party delegation participates in a ceremony commemorating the October Revolution and the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties.

Between 2 November and 6 December 1960 a Vietnam Lao Dong Party delegation led by President Ho Chi Minh went to Moscow to attend a ceremony commemorating the October Revolution and the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties.

In January 1961, the 3rd Plenum of the Party Central Committee observed that the World Congress of Communist and Workers Parties was a great success of the international communist and workers movement, and appealed for our Party and population to strictly observe the revolutionary principles of the plenum declaration, combined with the implementation of the missions outlined by the Third Party Congress.

20 December: Formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

In accordance with the Party's stand, in the revolutionary high tide of 1960 (20 December 1960), a Congress of People's Representatives from all parts of the South met in a liberated area in eastern Nam Bo to study the situation in the South and proclaimed the formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

The Front advocated solidarity among all strata of people -- the classes, political parties, religions, ethnic minority groups, democratic figures, and patriots -- regardless of political orientation, to overthrow the ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and the lackey Ngo Dinh Diem clique. On the basis of the



actual circumstances of the revolution in the South, the Front adopted a 10-point program the basic content of which was the overthrow of the Ngo Dinh Diem dictatorship in order to construct an independent, democratic, peaceful, and unified Vietnam.

The formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was the inevitable result of the revolutionary struggle movement of our people in South against the neocolonial ruling yoke of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys. The Front, carrying on and adding to the tradition of patriotism and ethnic solidarity, held high the flag of solidarity in opposing the U.S. for national salvation under new historical conditions. The Front's 10-point program correctly resolved the basic problems of the revolution in South Vietnam, especially the problems of national independence, democracy, and peaceful neutrality.

The emergence of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam signified an important event in the revolution in the South. The Front program, which followed the line delineated by our Party, had the effect of more broadly rallying all strata of patriotic people to oppose the U.S. and Diem, further isolate and divide the enemy, and struggle for national independence and democracy.

26 September 1960: Soldiers and people of Laos liberate Sam Nua.

On 23 May 1960, with the assistance of some patriotic soldiers in the rightist army and of the local people, the Pathet Lao leaders, including Chairman Souphanouvong, who had been imprisoned by the Laotian reactionaries near Vientiane, escaped from prison and returned safely to the base area.

On 26 September 1960, the Pathet Lao armed forces, in coordination with the Vietnamese volunteer troops, liberated the city of Sam Nua and nearly all of Sam Nua Province.

The liberation of Sam Nua was a historic victory, an important victory of the Laotian revolution which opened the way for a succession of future victories. With the liberation of Sam Nua the Laotian revolution had a solid, relatively large base area which could be expanded in three directions -- north, south, and west -- and bordered socialist North Vietnam. That was a major advantage in organizing leadership of the revolution throughout Laos until the day of complete victory.

1960: The Chinese rulers prevent the Vietnamese people from stepping up their armed struggle in the South.

In May 1960, in talks with Vietnamese representatives, the Chinese rulers said the following with regard to Vietnam: "It should not be said that military struggle or political struggle is more important. Whether political struggle or military struggle, there is no question of winning political power immediately. The struggle must be a protracted one .... Even if Diem is overthrown unification cannot be achieved right away, for the U.S. imperialists would never agree to that ....

"The North may support the South politically and help the South in adopting policies, but it must principally nurture the spirit of self-reliance of their brothers in the South .... When the chances of success are certain, the North may aid the South militarily, i.e. when it is absolutely certain that nothing will happen, it will be possible to supply some weapons without anyone knowing about it. But in general it should not lend assistance."

That proved that they were not sympathetic with the "simultaneous uprising" of our people in the South, but when they could not prevent it they wanted our people in the North to abandon their obligation to the South and let the people in the South fight alone. They wanted the people in the South to restrict their armed struggle to small-scale attacks and guerrilla attacks, by companies or platoons.

Masters of their own destiny, the people of Vietnam strongly advanced the revolutionary war in the South. At the end of 1963 the fascist dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem, a lackey of the U.S. imperialists, was overthrown and the U.S. "special war" was completely bankrupted.

## Chapter II

From the Beginning of 1961 to Mid-1965

The Revolution in the South Develops From Local Uprisings to a Revolutionary War Which Combines Armed Struggle With Political Struggle and Defeats the U.S Imperialists' "Special War" Strategy.

1961

January 1961: The Political Bureau issues a Resolution (which became a Directive on 31 January 1961) regarding the direction and immediate missions and tasks of the revolution in the South.

After the repeated victories of the revolution in the South following the simultaneous uprising, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met to concretize the resolution of the Third Party Congress regarding the direction and immediate missions and tasks of the revolution in the South.

The North was becoming increasingly strong in all respects and, along with the socialist countries, had become a solid bloc. It was increasingly capable of preserving the peace and more strongly defending itself. It was increasingly becoming a source of support and a base area of the revolution to liberate the South, and played an increasingly decisive role in the enterprise of liberating our nation.

With regard to the situation in the South, the Political Bureau concluded that "The period of temporary stability of the U.S.-Diem regime has ended and the period of continuous crisis has begun; the appearance of the forms of limited guerrilla warfare and local uprisings has opened the way for a revolutionary high tide in the South, because "The revolution in the South is developing along the path of a general uprising, with new characteristics, and there remain practically no

possibility that the revolution will develop peacefully" and "The people's general offensive and general uprising will be carried out in order to overthrow the U.S.-Diem regime and liberate the South."

With regard to the struggle form and motto, the Political Bureau pointed out that "At present, because the balance of forces has changed it is necessary to change the struggle motto to "Step up the political struggle while also stepping up the armed struggle until it is on a par with the political struggle, and attack the enemy both politically and militarily."

Because the comparison of forces and topographical characteristics differed from area to area, the Political Bureau set forth a work motto for the three areas: "In the jungle-and-mountain area, stress military struggle. In the lowland area, military struggle and political struggle may be at equal levels. In the urban areas, stress the political struggle."

The Political Bureau set forth the following mission for the South in the immediate future: "Endeavor to rapidly build up our forces politically and militarily, rally the broad revolutionary forces in the Liberation Front, launch a strong mass political movement, positively annihilate the enemy's manpower and conserve and develop our forces, smash the enemy's governmental administration and forces on an increasingly larger scale, advance to mastering the jungle-and-mountains area and retake all of the lowlands, endeavor to build bases and step up the political struggle in the cities, and create all conditions and take advantage of all favorable opportunities to overthrow the U.S.-Diem regime and liberate the South."

The 31 January 1961 resolution of the Political Bureau Plenum provided very important strategic guidance for the revolution in the South. It resulted from the creative application of the Resolution of the 15th of the Party Central Committee and the Resolution of the Third Party Congress under new conditions and set forth basic matters regarding the revolutionary line and methods in the South in the new phase and in continuing to advance the revolution.

15February: The revolutionary armed forces in the South unified.

From the formation of small armed self-defense and armed propaganda units in 1957-1958 to the beginning of 1961 the revolutionary armed forces developed very rapidly all over the South and there began to take form three types of troops: regular troops, local troops, and guerrilla militia.

However, the organizational forms and names by which the units were known differed from area to area and the command and guidance system was not yet truly solid.

In view of that situation, on 15 February 1961 a military conference held in War Zone D decided to unify all revolutionary armed forces in the South into the "Liberation Army of South Vietnam" and changed the Regional Military Committee into the Liberation Command of South Vietnam.

On 27 July 1961 the Party Command and Command of Interzone 5 were formed, and because of the developmental requirements of the revolutionary war the first main-force regiment of the revolutionary armed forces -- designated Q.761 -- was formed in Eastern Nam Bo on 27 July 1961.

The unification of the revolutionary armed forces of the South reflected the maturization of our armed forces in the South and the transformation of the revolution to a new phase, the phase of waging a revolutionary war.

January to May 1961: Soldiers and people of Laos liberate the Plaine des Jarres and many other places in Laos.

On 1 January 1961 the Pathet Lao troops and the other patriotic forces, coordinating with volunteer Vietnamese troops, liberated the Plaine des Jarres and the Noong Het area in Sieng Khoang Province. The city of Phong Saly was liberated on the same day.

Building on that victory, the Pathet Lao troops and the volunteer Vietnamese troops liberated one place after another: Nam Bac and Ban Ban (4 January), Tha Vieng (12 January), Vang Vieng and Tha Thom (18 January), Muong Hien (29 January), Pa Thi (31 January), Sala Phukhun (7 March), Cam Cot-Lat Sao-Na Pe (11 March), and Pha Tang (19 March).

Heavily defeated, the reactionary rightist Phumi Nosavan proposed a ceasefire. The Pathet Lao accepted that proposal and representatives of the three factions met at Hin Hop, then at Na Mon. In May 1961 they agreed to a ceasefire.

However, that agreement was sabotaged by the reactionaries just after it was signed, so the fighting continued and became increasingly fierce.

The victories in Laos during the first months of 1961 were also victories of the revolution in the South of our country following the simultaneous uprisings which caused the comparison of forces between revolution and counterrevolution to change in a manner favorable to the revolutions of both countries. Both the status and power of the Laotian revolution developed, the liberated area was expanded, the armed forces became stronger, and the prestige of the Neo Lao Hach Xat became increasingly strong among the Laotian masses. They also strongly supported the revolution in our country.

1961: The U.S. imperialists begin the "special war," use war stratagems to attain their aggressive goals.

During the first months of 1961, after the victorious "simultaneous uprisings" in the South, the revolution developed in an offensive status and won one great victory after another. The puppet army and administration were forced with the peril of complete collapse.

The U.S. imperialists would not accept defeat. In January 1961 Kennedy replaced Eisenhower as the U.S. President and obstinately moved further along on the path of armed aggression on an even larger scale.



Having lost superiority with regard to nuclear weapons in his counterrevolutionary global strategy, and faced with the growth of the national independence movement with a tendency toward socialism, Kennedy had to come up with a new military strategy -- "flexible response" -- with its three types of war: "special war," "limited war," and "world war." His objectives were to enter into a detente with the Soviet Union, suppress the national independence movement, and make Vietnam the first testing ground for that new military strategy.

The U.S. plotted to rescue the Diem regime from collapse and defeat the revolutionary forces, correct the weaknesses of Diem's army with regard to numbers, equipment, and mobility, regain the initiative, and regain the lost territory, while also preparing material-technical bases so that the U.S. could intervene militarily in South Vietnam when the situation permitted.

On 11 May 1961 Kennedy sent 400 additional U.S. Special Forces troops and 100 advisers to South Vietnam, while also ordering the organization of secret sabotage and harassment campaigns against North Vietnam, the development of the puppet army to 200,000 regular troops, 68,000 Civil Guards, and the creation and expansion of local troops.

In June 1961 Kennedy sent the Staley delegation to South Vietnam to work with Taylor in drafting a plan to "pacify" the South in 18 months and prepare the way for the new U.S. strategy in South Vietnam: the "special war" strategy.

In implementing "special war" in South Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists waged a neocolonial war of aggression, used Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese, and used the lackey forces of the puppet army and the puppet administration, with weapons, equipment war facilities, and financial aid provided by the U.S., under U.S. command, and with the support of U.S. forces, to carry out the U.S. plan. U.S. combat troops would be used in a limited manner when necessary.

In December 1961, Kennedy and the U.S. National Security Council approved a recommendation from Taylor to expand the U.S. advisory group and send U.S. troops to play support roles in the battles, a decision Johnson (then the U.S. Vice President) later characterized as follows: "Kennedy made a basic decision on Vietnam: to officially jump into the special war."

The U.S. imperialists expanded and prolonged the war by obstinately and beligerently plunged into the "special war" in the South. The Vietnamese revolution encountered many additional difficulties. But the true nature of the country-stealing, country-selling U.S. and its lackeys was exposed. The "special war" strategy could not save them from their peril but caused them to suffer a defeat, greater than their previous defeat, at the hands of the indomitable Vietnamese people, who were determined to fight for independence and freedom.

1962

February 1962 and December 1962: Political Bureau resolutions on the immediate tasks of the revolution in the South.

After the Resolution of the 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee and the Political Bureau directive of January 1961, the revolutionary movement was

maintained and developed more and more broadly. It defeated the enemy's counter-attacks and forced the enemy into an increasingly weak, passive position. In order to rescue their lackeys, the U.S. imperialists assumed de facto military command in the South, increased the supplying of equipment, and brought in some armed forces to support the lackeys so that they could continue to wage their war of aggression in the South, and took another step in their policy of intervention, the first one in which they used U.S. armed forces.

Faced with that situation, in February 1962 the Political Bureau met to discuss the immediate tasks of the revolution in the South.

The Political Bureau determined that the stronger intervention by the U.S. imperialists would create many additional difficulties for the revolution in the South and cause the war to become increasingly fierce, but that, in actuality, there had essentially been no changes in the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy and in the objectives of the revolution in the South. The U.S. imperialists not only could not prevent the revolutionary movement of the people of the south from increasingly developing but would, on the contrary, cause the contradictions between our people and the U.S. imperialists to become increasingly deep.

The Political Bureau adopted the following policy for the immediate future: "Resolutely promoting the political and military struggles, winning and maintaining the initiative, forcing the enemy into a more passive state, positively build up our forces in all regards, destroying the Staley-Taylor plan, further expanding the national liberation movement, further strengthening the national solidarity bloc, exacerbating the enemy's internal contradictions, winning the support and sympathy of the forces of peace, democracy, national independence, and socialism in the world against the large-scale armed intervention of the U.S. imperialists in South Vietnam, and advancing to the winning of even greater victories."

The Political Bureau also stressed "Consolidating and expanding the base areas and strengthening the people's forces in all respects -- politically, militarily, economically, and culturally -- in order to advance to building a large, strong armed force which can, along with all the people, defeat the enemy troops and win ultimate victory."

Between the February 1962 resolution of the Political Bureau and the end of 1962 we won many great victories and the enemy's plan to "pacify" the South in 18 months was essentially defeated. We annihilated and routed hundreds of thousands of enemy troops, wiped out thousands of outposts, and destroyed nearly 3,000 strategic hamlets. Our forces, such as the base-level Party organizations, the armed forces, and the mass forces, were much stronger than in the past and the liberated area was maintained and in some places expanded. As for the enemy, although they were heavily defeated they continued to obstinately continue to strengthen their forces and wage an increasingly fierce "special war" against our people in the South.

In view of that situation, on 10 December the Political Bureau met and issued a resolution on the situation, direction, and immediate missions of the revolution in the South.

The Political Bureau observed that the great victories of the political struggle and the armed struggle, which depleted and annihilated more of the enemy's manpower than in the past, along with the victories won in destroying strategic hamlets and maintaining and developing the movement, which had caused the population in the area we controlled to increase, had very great importance in the situation of the enemy using all of their forces to "pacify" the South in 18 months. Those victories demonstrated that we were capable of maintaining and developing the movement.

"The struggle between ourselves and the enemy in the South has in fact been a war. The role, forces, and requirements of armed struggle must be further increased," and "the war in the South is in nature both a civil war and an anti-aggression war, but it is in actual fact an anti-aggression war."

The Political Bureau also set forth the specific features of the mission of promoting political struggle: our absolute superiority and the mobilization of the entire Party and the entire population in building armed forces, strongly and broadly developing guerrilla warfare, endeavoring to destroy the enemy's "strategic hamlets," and, in the immediate future, defeating the enemy's offensive plan for 1963. Organizing activity cycles in which the main-force troops, local troops, guerrillas, and sappers would coordinate in destroying the enemy's "strategic hamlets" bit by bit in certain areas, or launching attacks to paralyze the enemy's communications, expand our bases, oppose sweeping operations, and oppose encroachments, would be modes leading to future guerrilla campaigns. The general scale would be a battalion wiping out an enemy company. When there were favorable conditions for doing so we would concentrate and coordinate two or three battalions.

The Political Bureau resolutions of February 1962 and December 1962 had reached important conclusions regarding the nature of the struggle between ourselves and the enemy and delineated the developmental direction of that struggle to serve as a basis on which to guide all of our activities and push the U.S.-puppet "special war" deeply into a status of defeat.

16 February and 3 March: First Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

Since its formation at the end of 1960 the National Liberation Front, because of its correct action program, which met the aspirations of the broad masses, had broad influence among all strata of people in the South.

Because of the great victories of the revolution in the South, a Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, set to delineate the missions of the Front in the new situation and elect an official Central Committee, in order to advance the revolution to the winning of new victories.

On 16 February 1962 the First Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was convened. It remained in session until 3 March 1962 and was attended by more than 100 delegates representing all social strata, religious, and ethnic groups of many different political tendencies.



The Congress approved a resolution regarding the missions of the Front in the new situation, the major policies of the Front regarding peace, neutrality, ethnic groups, and land, and the policies regarding the bourgeois class, intellectuals, compatriots abroad, religions, and the soldiers and personnel of the puppet administration in the South.

The Congress elected the official Central Committee of the Front, of which lawyer Nguyen Huu Tho was elected Chairman.

The Congress issued an important declaration which affirmed the over-all missions of the Front as being: "Uniting all the people, resolutely struggling against the U.S. imperialist aggressors and warmongers, overthrowing the ruling clique of Ngo Dinh Diem, a lackey of the U.S. imperialists, the formation of a broad democratic national alliance administration in the South, the achievement of national independence, freedom, and democracy, the improvement of living conditions, the maintenance of peace, implementation of a policy of neutrality, the eventual peaceful unification of the homeland, and positive contribution to maintaining peace in Indochina, Southeast Asia, and the world."

After the Congress the Front made public four urgent stands to save the nation in the situation of the U.S. imperialists steadily escalating their armed aggression in our country:

1. The U.S. imperialists must end their war of aggression in the South.
2. The "strategic hamlets" must be disbanded.
3. A national coalition government must be set up in the South.
4. A diplomatic line of peace and neutrality must be implemented.

The Congress enhanced the Front's prestige. It had a great significance in bringing the various forces into the ranks of the Front to oppose the aggression of the U.S. imperialists, and with regard to foreign relations in that it helped win the sympathy and support of the justice-loving and peace-loving people of the world.

1962: Formation of the Air Defense-Air Force Armed Forces Branch.

After the victorious conclusion of the 1954-1955 French resistance war, in 1962, in accordance with the resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee and the policy of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, our Air Force was formed and the air defense forces were detached from the field artillery.

The Military Commission also decided to combine the air-defense force and the air force into a single armed forces branch: the Air Defense-Air Force Armed Forces Branch. That was a new developmental step of the Vietnam People's Army on its path of advance to becoming a professional, modern army with many technical combat arms and armed forces branch.



Under the conditions of our forces being few in number and our material bases being weak, the merging of those two forces into an armed forces branch under the unified command of a single Command had a very positive significance. It enabled those two forces to coordinate more closely in defending our skies. The use of a radar system and the ensuring of material-technical bases enabled both forces to operate more economically and conveniently, and contributed greatly to strengthening the homeland's air defenses, twice defeated wars of destruction waged by the U.S. imperialists, and contributed worthily to the enterprise of liberating the South and unifying the nation.

May 1962: Formation of the first main-force group in Military Region 5.

By mid-1962 the revolutionary armed forces of Military Region 5 had become quite large and strong. The local troops of the provinces and the militia and guerrillas of the hamlets and villages had all developed, and there were dozens of mobile battalions. Because of the requirement of increasing the concentrated operational scale in Military Region 5 and creating a strong main-force fist to fulfill the mission of annihilating the enemy on a larger scale, in May 1962 the Party Committee and Command of Military Region 5 decided to form the first three regiments (then called "the work sites" of the Military Zone.)

-- Regiment 1, operating in Quang Nam, consisted of the 60th and 91st infantry battalions.

-- Regiment 2, operating in Quang Ngai and Cong Tum provinces, consisted of the 90th, 95th, and 80th battalions and a cadre group.

-- Regiment 3, operating in Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, and Gia Lai provinces, consisted of the 50th, 30th, and 32d battalions and a cadre group.

Although at first we continued to emphasize the use of individual battalions, the regiments gradually came of age with regard to both development and concentrated combat, in order to carry out the policy of transforming the Central Highlands battlefield into an enemy-annihilating battlefield, a main-force battlefield.

1962: The soldiers and people of Laos are victorious at Nam Tha. The second coalition government is formed in Laos and the Geneva Agreement on Laos is signed.

During the first part of 1962 the Laotian revolution continued to win many victories, especially on the upper Laos battlefield. Between January 1962 and April 1962 the Pathet Lao troops liberated nearly all of the northern part of Luang Prabang Province.

On 8 May, after a long, rather large-scale operation, with the coordination of the volunteer Vietnamese troops, liberated Nam Tha Province, a province in northernmost Laos which had a very important position, bordering on China, Burma, and Thailand. The enemy suffered their greatest defeat ever in Laos: more than 1,600 members of the strategic mobile forces of the Lao puppets were annihilated (GM.11 was totally annihilated or routed, and GM.18 and GM.15 were heavily damaged). The liberated area in northern Laos was expanded by 8,000 kilometers, with a population of more than 76,000.

The victories on the Laotian battlefield, especially the Nam Tha victory perplexed the U.S. and its lackeys. The U.S. imperialists had to accept a setback in Laos in order to concentrate their capabilities on coping with the situation in South Vietnam.

On 7 June 1962 a conference of the three parties in Laos was held in the Plaine des Jarres, and on 12 June an agreement on the formation of a coalition government was signed.

The coalition government decided to effect a ceasefire throughout Laos on 24 June.

In the second Coalition Government, Prince Souphanouvong was named Vice Premier and the Pathet Lao gained two new seats -- the Ministry of Economics and Planning and the Ministry of Communications, Propaganda, and Tourism -- and two Vice Ministries.

On 2 July 1962, 14 nations participated in the Geneva Conference on Laos, and on 23 July the Geneva Treaty on Laos was signed. For the first time in its history Laos won an international commitment to "honor its independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity."

On 17 September U.S. troops who had supported the rightist army began to withdraw from Laos and by 6 October all 666 of them had been withdrawn.

The 1962 victories of the Laotian revolution were very great, with regard not only to the Laotian revolution but also to the world revolution. The lessons of the Laotian revolution were especially important with regard to the revolution in the South. They allowed us to evaluate the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists and enabled us to see the difficulties of the U.S. imperialists in resolving complicated international problems, while at the same time contributing to further illuminating the prospects of the enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation by the people of Vietnam and Laos, the capabilities for resolving such problems as a coalition government, the method of simultaneously fighting and negotiating, the possibility of gradually restraining and defeating the enemy, etc.

1963

2 January: The Ap Bac victory.

By the end of 1962, although the enemy had been heavily defeated the U.S. imperialists still believed in the efficacy of the technical equipment they had supplied the puppet army. Although we had won many victories we had not yet defeated the enemy's tactic of achieving mobility by using armored vehicles and helicopters. They were still causing us many difficulties and losses. Defeating the "armored vehicle mobility" and "helicopter mobility" tactics became an urgent requirement of our armed forces if we were to develop our armed activities and armed forces. Carrying out the Party's policy, many local units made preparations and carried out studies to fulfill that requirement.

Upon learning that a new unit of the revolutionary armed forces had arrived at Ap Bac, a small hamlet in the village of Tay Phu, Cai Lay District, My Tho Province,

located about 20 kilometers from the city of My Tho, the U.S.-puppet forces immediately mobilized a large force with airplanes, amphibious vehicles, and supporting artillery to sweep through Ap Bac, in hopes of wiping out our unit and bolstering the declining morale of the puppet army.

The enemy used three battalions of the 7th Division, the 8th Airborne Battalion, 8 Civil Guard companies, and 3 civil guard commando companies, a total of 25 infantry companies totalling more than 2,000 men along with 13 M.113's, 13 boats of the various kinds, 8 fighter-bombers, 20 helicopters, 11 transport and observation planes, 6 105mm artiller pieces, and 6 106.7 mm mortars, under the direct command of the 7th Division Commander, who was also Commander of the Military Region, and under the supervision of U.S. advisers.

Our forces included a reinforced company of the 261st main-force battalion of Zone 8, a provincial company, a support platoon, a platoon of local troops from Chau Thanh District, and local militia and guerrilla forces, under the command of a battalion commander.

The battle lasted from 0600 to 1700 on 2 January 1963. The enemy attacked five times with boats, helicopters, and M.113's carrying troops and with the support of airplanes and artillery. But all of their attacks were broken up. After suffering heavy losses the enemy had to accept defeat and called off the operation.

The results were that we killed or wounded 450 of the enemy (including 19 American), damaged 8 helicopters, 3 M.113's and 1 boat, and completely defeated the enemy's sweeping operation.

Ap Bac was a good anti-sweeping battle in which the three types of troops coordinated their forces in the anti-sweeping zone with the forces of the surrounding villages, and combined military struggle with political struggle.

The victory at Ap Bac had an important historical significance. It signified the coming of age of the new revolutionary armed forces in the South. It opened the way for the bankrupting of the "helicopter mobility" and "armored vehicle mobility" tactics, the trump cards of the U.S.-puppet forces in the "special war." At the same time, it shattered the confidence of the puppet army in modern, advanced equipment and technical facilities, and in the mobile support forces and firepower of the U.S., and the confidence of the U.S. in the ability of the puppet army to stand up against the attacks of our troops.

In evaluating the battle of Ap Bac, comrade Le Duan said, "After the Ap Bac battle the enemy realized that it would be difficult to defeat us."

The victory at Ap Bac inspired our armed forces and people in the South and gave rise to a movement to study and surpass Ap Bac, and advance to winning even more brilliant feats of arms.

April 1963: The Party Central Committee holds its 8th Plenum.

Following the 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (July 1961) regarding the development of agricultural production and its 7th Plenum (June 1962) regarding



industrial construction and development, the 8th Plenum of the Party Central Committee met in April 1963 to discuss the first five-year plan (1961-1965) for the development of the national economy.

The Plenum made a profound analysis of the situation and characteristics of the great undertaking of constructing socialism in the North, and more fully evaluated the advantages and difficulties.

It criticized the incorrect tendencies regarding the Party's policy of constructing an independent, autonomous socialist economy in our country, in order to develop and fully utilize our country's existing and latent capabilities, relying principally on our own efforts while benefitting from international cooperation. In that undertaking, total dependence on the assistance of the fraternal nations was entirely contrary to the principle of proletarian internationalism.

When approving the norms of the first five-year state plan, the plenum clearly analyzed the line, path of advance, and rate of socialist industrialization in the North, while also developing, concretizing, and further enriching a number of matters regarding the direction of the construction of the initial material-technical bases of socialism, such as the relationships between industry and agriculture, between economic construction and the strengthening of national defense, and between accumulation and consumption, the direction of investment and capital construction, etc. The state plan was drafted on the basis of developing the spirit of relying principally on ourselves, frugally developing our country, and endeavoring to develop the latent capabilities, in order to overcome the remaining weaknesses of our country's economy, with the objective of "endeavoring to build the initial material-technical bases of socialism, making progress in carrying out socialist industrialization, and successfully completing the socialist transformation."

The resolutions of the 5th, 7th, and 8th plenums of the Party Central Committee had an important significance in socialist construction and in completing the socialist transformation in the North. Implementing the correct policies of the Party, our people have continually developed production, stabilized and in some ways improved living conditions, and strengthened the capability of the North to effectively aid the great front line in the South and fulfill our international missions.

December 1963: Party Central Committee holds its 9th Plenum.

The Party Central Committee held its 9th Plenum to discuss a number of matters regarding the international situation and the revolutionary situation and missions in South Vietnam.

With regard to the revolution in the South, the Plenum analyzed and compared the forces developmental capabilities, and prospects of the movement and concretized the strategic mottoes and activity mottoes set forth by the January 1961, February 1962, and December 1962 resolutions of the Political Bureau.

The resolution defined the mission of our Party, population, and army as being "endeavoring to advance to the winning of new victories," and clearly delineated



the necessary developmental direction of the revolution in the South to win ultimate victory: "winning partial victories, advancing step by step, and advancing to a general offensive-general uprising."

On the basis of analyzing the "special war" of the U.S. imperialists, the resolution declared that "We must be capable of restraining the enemy in the 'special war' and of defeating them in that kind of War," and that we must "fully understand the motto of protracted conflict will also taking advantage of opportunities to win victory in a relatively brief period of time," and "flexibly combine political struggle with armed struggle, with both political struggle and armed struggle playing a very basic, very decisive role" but with "military struggle playing the direct decisive role" in smashing the enemy's military forces -- the base of support for their rule -- and enabling the revolution to win victory." In order to fulfill that requirement, "the most important, decisive matter in all cases is to continue to strengthen our forces -- especially our military forces -- in all regards."

31 December: The 32nd "Black Panther" Ranger Battalion annihilated in the Duong Long-Ben Cat battle.

Duong Long is a hamlet in the village of Thanh Tuyen, Ben Cat District, Thu Dau Mot Province, about 10 kilometers from the town of Ben Suc.

On 31 December 1963 the U.S.-puppet forces launched a large sweeping operation designated "Dai Phong 35" in Tay Ninh and Thu Dau Mot provinces.

The 32nd "Black Panther" Battalion, a battalion of the puppet 5th Division, which consisted of bullies and hooligans from that division's infantry regiments and specialized in commando raids and in probing the guerrilla bases, and which was commanded by U.S. advisers, was assigned to spearhead a sweeping column advancing along the Ben Suc-Duong Long road.

Our forces in the Duong Long area consisted of an understrength infantry regiment made up of two infantry battalions and an infantry company.

Although the launched strong bombing and strafing attacks, and even used napalm, the "Black Panther" Battalion suffered heavy losses and had to retreat. Our troops pursued and surrounded it and struck it with one blow after another, so only 30 of the enemy escaped. The U.S. advisers and the wounded battalion commander had to be evacuated by helicopter during the retreat. We captured large quantities of weapons and ammunition.

The Duong Luong-Ben Cat battle was an anti-sweeping battle in which our troops took the initiative, resolutely attacked the enemy, had good fighting methods, and won a smashing victory.

That battle, in which for the first time a puppet battalion was wiped out on the southern battlefield, victoriously concluded the year 1963 and opened the way for enemy-annihilating battles on an increasingly larger scale.

1964

9 January: First All-North People's Air Defense Conference.

At the end of 1963, because of the serious U.S.-puppet defeats in South Vietnam and in order to intensify their war of aggression in South Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists adopted the policy of stepping up their attacks on North Vietnam in order to prevent the North from aiding the South.

In view of that situation, in order to take the initiative in defending the North and to continue to actively aid the South, in accordance with the stand of the Party the High Command convened the first People's Air Defense Conference to discuss specific methods to defeat the enemy's air raids.

Attending the conference were representatives of local governmental administrations, military organs, and other organs, representatives of government ministries, and representatives of some organs, armed forces branches, and combat arms of the armed forces.

After the conference people's air defense organizations were set up in all localities under the authority of the chairmen or vice chairmen of the administrative committees. A number of key municipalities and cities with many material-technical bases and large populations constructed airplane observation posts, evacuated stocks of valuable or dangerous materials, organized the digging and construction of many air raid shelters and trenches, organized air defense drills, etc.

The air defense troops were deployed to defend the large cities and the industrial zones, and a small number of mobile units were used to ambush airplanes on reconnaissance missions and parachuting U.S.-puppet commandoes. The militia and self-defense forces were trained to shoot down airplanes with infantry weapons and were organized into many low-altitude firepower clusters.

Evasion, evacuation, and dispersion were carried out step-by-step and in accordance with plans, which both ensured production and other work and ensured the safety of the people, the organs, and the warehouses.

The convening at an early date of the All-North People's Air Defense Conference proved that our Party accurately and promptly foresaw the U.S. imperialists' plot to attack the North and was a creative application of the people's war viewpoint in opposing the enemy's war of destruction waged mainly by their air force. Therefore, our soldiers and people in the North took the initiative and deservingly punished the U.S. Air Force beginning with its very first attack against the North, and was able to limit the damage caused by their attacks.

27 March: President Ho Chi Minh convenes a special political conference.

In 1964 the Vietnamese revolution was in an extremely complicated and urgent situation. The "special war" of the U.S. imperialists in the South of our country was developing to a high level, and at the same time the U.S. continued to escalate and expand the war on an increasingly larger scale. There was a serious lack of solidarity in the international communist and workers movement, and the U.S. imperialists were seeking all ways to take advantage of that to oppose the Vietnamese revolution.

In view of that situation, in accordance with the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam President Ho Chi Minh convened a special political conference on 27 March 1964 which was attended by 325 official delegates of the political parties, mass organizations, ethnic groups, religions, regrouped compatriots from the South, and compatriots returned from abroad. More than 500 observers from among the various strata of people in the capital were also present.

At the conference, President Ho Chi Minh read an important report. After reviewing the major events in our country and in the world during the past 10 years, he clearly expressed our people's attitude toward the plot of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys to commit aggression against the North. "If they recklessly attack the North they are certain to suffer a disastrous defeat. Our people in all parts of the country will resolutely defeat them, the people of the socialist countries and the progressive people of the world will give us their all-out support, and the people of the U.S. and its allies will oppose them."

He also said, "For the common benefit of the world revolutionary movement and the enterprise of opposing imperialism, we continually endeavor to contribute to maintaining and strengthening solidarity in the socialist camp and in the international communist movement."

He made the following appeal: "Everyone must do the work of two for the sake of our compatriots in the South."

The special political conference convened by President Ho Chi Minh expressed the iron-like solidarity and fighting will of our people in the North, manifested our country's tradition of unity in order to defend the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, defend the accomplishments of the revolution and our peaceful labor, endeavor to help our compatriots in the South to completely defeat the U.S. imperialist aggressors and their lackeys in order to liberate the South and unify the nation, and unite with the working class and people of the world in the struggle against imperialism, headed by the U.S. imperialist.

27 May 1964: The second Laotian Coalition Government collapses, the Pathet Lao troops and the volunteer Vietnamese troops attack and liberate the Plaine des Jarres.

After the formation of the second Coalition Government in Laos the Laotian revolution adopted the slogan of struggling for peace, neutrality, national reconciliation, and national unification.

The U.S. imperialists and the Phumi Nosavan lackeys, unwilling to admit defeat, sought all ways to sabotage the tripartite coalition government, to paralyze it and then carry out a coup d'etat and overthrow it. Furthermore, the U.S. endeavored to coerce, inveigle, and bribe Kong Le and had its hirelings monopolize, murder, and arrest people who were neutralist and progressive.

Because of the enemy's sabotage activities, the Pathet Lao ministers in the coalition government had to withdraw to Khang Khay (Xiang Khoang Province) and a number of neutralist ministers had to flee. The second Laotian Coalition Government all but collapsed. Kong Le increasingly leaned toward the reactionary rightists.



In December 1963 the U.S. and Phumi Nosavan concentrated five battalions and the Vang Pao bandit forces occupied the southern part of the Plaine des Jarres, then organized the troops of Phumi and Kong Le into combined GM's [Groupe Mobile] in order to take the defensive area of the Pathet Lao in the northern part of the Plaine des Jarres.

On 19 April 1964 the U.S. ordered Kuprasit to carry out a coup d'etat to completely eliminate the Pathet Lao from the coalition government and make the Phumi government completely subservient to the U.S.

At the beginning of 1964, a month-long joint operation by volunteer Vietnamese troops and Pathet Lao troops wiped out, captured, or routed an important part of the enemy's manpower (899 were killed or captured), liberated the entire Na Xay-Nam Thon area to the northern part of Pakhinbun, and completely smashed the plot to permanently occupy central Laos and transform southern Laos into a U.S. military base.

In February 1964 our Military Commission reached an agreement with the Laotian Military Commission regarding the policy of stepping up dry-season activities all over Laos, especially in the Plaine des Jarres and Xieng Khoang, in order to improve the military-political situation in Laos. In the Plaine des Jarres we concentrated forces to annihilate the GM13 and GM18 units of Phumi Nosavan, then annihilated Kong Le's GM17.

In mid-May 1964, taking advantage of the mutual suspicion of the Phumi Nosavan and Kong Le forces in the Plaine des Jarres, and of dissention with Kong Le's ranks, we and our friends agreed to combine a military offensive with enemy proselyting, caused a revolt in airhorn battalions 4 and 6, rapidly liberated the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang-Muong Sui-Tha Thon area encompassing 3,000 square kilometers and connecting the Plaine des Jarres with the Sam Nua, northern Laos, and southern Laos base areas; cleared Rt.7 to Vietnam; and wiped out an important part of the enemy's manpower (2,500 of the enemy were put out of action.)

The victory on the Plaine des Jarres resulted in the elimination of the traitorous, pseudo-neutral troops of Kong Le, the weakening of the rightist army, and the winning over of the progressive neutralist forces of Colonel Duon, who joined the Pathet Lao. The revolution mastered a very important strategic area, a battlefield which would draw in, tie down, and annihilate the enemy's manpower in future years. It would be the battlefield which determined the victory of the revolutionary war in Laos.

2 August: Harassment and aggressive activities lead to the U.S. imperialists' "Gulf of Tonkin Incident."

In mid-1964, because of their increasingly heavier defeats in South Vietnam, the U.S. imperialists began to use their air force and navy to attack the North more brazenly and stepped up their aerial reconnaissance and their sending in of commandos to carry out sabotage.

In March 1964 Johnson approved the De Soto plan to use U.S. destroyers to patrol in the Gulf of Tonkin to prevent us from sending supplies by sea, while also



harassing and reconnoitering our coast and supporting the activities of puppet commando ships, which captured our fishermen at sea in order to interrogate them. In mid-1964 the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff drafted a plan to bomb the North and approved a list of 94 targets to be attacked when the order was given.

On 12 June puppet commandoes blew up the Hang Bridge in Thanh Hoa, and on 30 June they sabotaged the Dong Hoi waterworks.

On 30 July U.S. warships violated our coastal waters and fired on Hon Ngu Island (Nghe Tinh Province) 4 kilometers from the coast, and Hon Me Island (Thanh Hoa Province), 12 kilometers from the coast.

On 31 July the U.S. destroyer Maddox entered the zone south of Con Co Island to begin its "tour" of reconnoitering and threatening along our coast.

On 31 July and 1 August 1964 U.S. airplanes based in Laos bombed the border defense post at Nam Can and Nong De Village in Nghe Tinh Province, which were situated 7 to 20 kilometers from the Vietnamese-Laotian border.

Faced with that situation, our naval forces adopted the policy of striking back at and punishing pirates who violated our waters and our people's security.

At noon on Sunday, 2 August 1964, our navy's Squadron 3, consisting of three torpedo boats, was ordered to set out to resolutely punish the "acts of piracy" of the U.S. imperialists, and to attack the destroyer Maddox, which had penetrated deeply into our coastal waters in the area between Hon Me Island and Lach Truong in Thanh Hoa Province.

Our boats both launched torpedoes and fired on the bridge on the deck of the Maddox, which caused that ship to panic and turn around. It fired back with its guns and called in air support, but in the end it had to flee out of our country's coastal waters.

But on 4 August 1964 the Johnson administration again invented a story of our navy attacking U.S. warships for the second time in international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin and used that as an excuse to bomb four of our naval bases and an oil depot in the North on 5 August 1964.

On 7 August 1964 the U.S. Congress approved the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution," a resolution which the U.S. press regarded as being "equivalent to a declaration of war" and which Westmoreland regarded as "a decisive turning point with regard to morale and the course of the war in Vietnam." It enabled Johnson to "take all steps necessary to repulse any armed attack on U.S. forces ... including the use of armed forces to help any ally in need of aid to defend its freedom."

With the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution" the U.S. imperialists hoped to break out of their situation of passivity and stalemate in South Vietnam, but in fact the succeeding years demonstrated that that new act of adventurism could not save them from even heavier defeats.

5 August: The first battle in which the soldiers and people of the North deservedly punished the U.S. Air Force for attacking the North.

Having concocted the "Gulf of Tonkin Incident," Johnson used it as an excuse to launch air attacks against the North of our country.

On the afternoon of 5 August, 64 airplanes, including the propeller-driven A1 "Skyraiders," A4 "Skyhawks," F4 "Phantoms", and F8 "Crusaders," took off from the large Seventh Fleet carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation off the coast of Da Nang to attack many objectives in the North: Vinh, Ben Thuy, the mouth of the Gianh River, the city of Hon Gai, and Lach Truong (in Thanh Hoa Province).

Our soldiers and people, who had prepared in advance, fought very heroically. Eight modern U.S. planes were shot down and many pilots were killed. We captured the first pilot -- Everett Alvarez -- at Hon Gai.

On 6 August the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued the following declaration: The U.S. imperialists are being defeated and stalemated in the Vietnam war. In order to extricate themselves from that defeat and stalemate the U.S. imperialists are escalating their war of aggression in South Vietnam while feverishly provoking and attacking the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and threatening to expand the war to the North."

On 7 August the High Command held a ceremony to praise the people's armed forces for having achieved outstanding merit on 2 August and 5 August 1964. President Ho Chi Minh participated in the ceremony and gave the following advice: "You have won a glorious victory but do not be self-satisfied over your victory or subjectively underestimate the enemy. We must realize that the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys will never change their ways; they have many more barbarous plots."

5 August 1964: The Vietnamese People's Navy makes the date of its first merit in defeating the U.S. navy and air force in the North as its tradition day.

On 2 August 1964 one of our torpedo squadrons chased the destroyer Maddox from our coastal waters, which is regarded as our first victory over the U.S. navy. On 5 August 8 our People's Navy, along with the air-defense forces and people of Song Gianh, Cua Hoi, Lach Truong, and Hon Gai defeated the U.S. Air Force in a very glorious battle, shooting down many airplanes, capturing pilots, and defeating the first bombing raid by the U.S. Air Force in the North of our country.

For that reason, 5 August 1964 is regarded as the tradition day of the Vietnamese People's Navy.

In a period of 20 years (1955-1975), dating from its formation on 7 May 1955, our People's Navy fought thousands of battles with the U.S.-puppet navy, air force, and infantry, sank 353 warships, boats, and military cargo ships, killed 2,000 of the enemy, destroyed hundreds of thousands of tons enemy weapons and war facilities, heavily damaged 45 ships of the various kinds, including such ships as the cruiser Newport News, the destroyer Washington, etc., shot down 118 airplanes, knocked out 34 tanks, and dismantled or destroyed thousands of enemy torpedoes and bombs. In the second war of destruction of Nixon (1972), it detected and destroyed nearly 900 torpedoes, and kept the principal channels open to traffic. It transported nearly 300,000 tons of cargo of the various kinds to the battle-fields.

In the General Offensive and Uprising of the Spring of 1975, the People's Navy fought independently or in coordination with other units to liberate the islands and archipelagoes, from the Paracel Islands to Phu Quoc, achieved very brilliant feats of arms, and fulfilled its missions of transporting materiel, combat, taking control of the enemy naval bases, patrolling, and being prepared to fight to defend the liberated waters.

In a letter sent to the naval cadres and enlisted men on the occasion of the armed forces branch's 10th birthday, President Ho Chi Minh praised them as follows: "Our navy has fought heroically, positively annihilated the enemy, shot down U.S. airplanes and chased away U.S. warships, united in achieving merit, defended the people, and defended the homeland's skies and seas."

The armed forces branch as a whole was awarded 2,305 medals of the various kinds, including a Second-Class Independence medal and 42 Military Merit medal. Fifteen units and 13 cadres and enlisted men were awarded the honorific designation Hero of the People's Armed Forces.

September 1964: Formation of the Central Highlands Front.

The Central Highlands were a theater of extreme strategic importance with regard to the liberation war in the South and to the entire southern Indochina region.

The notice of the Supreme Military Party Committee of the Political Bureau on 27 November 1953 included the following statement: "Only by developing into the Central Highlands is it possible to obtain the most important strategic position in the South. If the enemy controls that strategic zone, it will be very difficult to improve the situation in the South."

In 1961 the Party Central Committee issued the following directive: "The common long-range base areas for entire southern region are the Central Highlands jungle-and-mountains region and eastern Nam Bo," and set forth the mottoes for the three regions, including the following: "In the jungle-and-mountain region the emphasis must be on military struggle. In that region the missions are annihilating enemy manpower and building up our forces."

By mid-1964 guerrilla warfare had been expanded on the Tay Nguyen battlefield. There were requirements that we gradually develop regular warfare, maintain an offensive posture, annihilate large enemy forces, and liberate territory.

In view of those urgent requirements, on 1 May 1964 the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee decided to set up the Western Subregion of Military Region 5, which was changed to the Central Highlands Front (B3) in September 1964.

When they were first formed, and during the initial period, the Command was a detachment of the Military Region 5 Command. The Front Command was gradually supplemented and its organization was relatively complete by 1966.

The armed forces of the Front were formed and developed from two sources: local armed forces which came of age in the local mass struggle movement and main-force troops sent south from the great rear area by the Ministry of National Defense.



The formation of the Central Highlands Front was an objective requirement resulting from the geographical, cultural, and economic conditions of the Central Highlands and its important position with regard to South Vietnam and southern Indochina. It was an inevitable development of the anti-U.S. liberation war for national salvation in order to meet the requirements of fighting large annihilating battles and promoting the development of regular warfare.

In the course of 11 years of combat and victory, there were many times when there were very great changes in our forces and times that were so difficult that they were seemingly insurmountable, but with its nature of a heroic army that was very close to the local ethnic minority groups, the Central Highlands Front stood firm, became increasingly strong, made extraordinary efforts, and did a good job of fulfilling the missions assigned by the Party Central Committee. Its victories at Plei Me, Ia Drang, Dac To, Cong Tum, and Buon Ma Thuot will live in history forever.

In the Spring of 1975, the Central Highlands began the historic strategic general offensive, which concluded the national liberation war, liberated the South, and unified the homeland.

18 November: The order to "Aim straight at the enemy and fire!" and the example of Nguyen Viet Xuan inspire a high tide of shooting down U.S. airplanes among the entire army and the entire population.

After their first defeat on 5 August the U.S. bandits continued to carry out aerial reconnaissance, attacked a number of places Military Region 4, and sent in commando ships and warships to operate in the Gulf of Tonkin.

On 18 November they launched air attacks in western Quang Binh. In that battle Anti-Aircraft Company 3 shot down an RF.101 and two T.28's. During that battle, on a battlefield full of smoke, fire, and enemy bombs and shells, company political officer Nguyen Viet Xuan shouted out the order, "Aim straight at the enemy and fire!" When his foot was shattered he had his men cut it off so that it wouldn't get in the way and continued to direct his unit in combat. That act manifested limitless loyalty to the homeland, profound hatred for the enemy, and resolute determination to annihilate the enemy to the end. During the final minutes of his life he continued to devote all of his thoughts and sentiment to his unit, to his comrades in arms, and to fulfilling his mission.

"Aim straight at the enemy and fire!" was an offensive slogan which manifested a revolutionary spirit and inspired everyone to be resolved to fight and defeat the U.S. sky bandits. It also was the generalization of the method of fighting the enemy airplanes and began a high tide of competition to shoot down enemy airplanes among the people's armed forces and our people, in order to defeat the air force of the U.S. imperialists.

7 and 8 December: The An Lao victory.

An Lao is a district in Binh Dinh Province 96 kilometers northwest of the provincial capital of Binh Dinh. It is situated in the midlands region in a valley 4 kilometers long and 22 kilometers long.



The enemy believed that An Lao was a safe area so there were only Civil Guard forces deployed at the district seat in fortified positions on a hill. There were two posts, along with 13 Civil Guard platoons in 18 strategic hamlets scattered throughout the district.

For our part, the activity campaign of July 1964 achieved good results. The most significant battle in that campaign was the battle of Ky Samh, fought on 8 July 1964 in Nam Tam Ky District, Quang Nam Province. For the first time a reinforced main-force battalion of Military Region 5, under regimental command, fought in broad daylight. Opposing it was a regular battalion and an M.113 squadron of the puppet army, with air and artillery support. We won a resounding victory which signified a turning point in the progress of the main-force troops of Military Region 5. The Military Region Command then decided to use a full-strength infantry regiment, in coordination with local district troops and militia-guerrilla forces, to launch an offensive campaign in the An Lao Subsector, in order to annihilate part of the enemy's manpower and liberate a corridor to connect with the Binh Ngai guerrilla base in order to create a staging area from which to descend into the lowlands and coordinate with the Nam Bo theater.

During the night of 6 December we wiped out the enemy deployed on the hill and in the two Civil Guard posts. The people in the hamlets arose, smashed 18 strategic hamlets, and routed the 13 Civil Guard platoons, but at the district seat we only inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. On the morning of 7 December we changed over to surrounding the district seat and prepared to attack the reinforcements.

On 7 and 8 December we continued to attack the reinforcements, knocking out six M.113's and killing a number of the enemy, held the places we had taken, propagandized our policies among the people, and created a guerrilla base in the newly liberated area. Heavily defeated, on 15 December the enemy completely withdrew from that area.

The results were that we killed or captured 618 of the enemy, captured 300 weapons (including 2 106.7mm mortars), destroyed 6 M.113's, smashed 18 strategic hamlets, routed Civil Guard platoons, and liberated an area with 15,000 people.

The An Lao victory, along with the Binh Gia campaign and the guerrilla warfare movement throughout the South, forced the puppet army and administration into a situation of imminent collapse in the winter and spring of 1964-1965 and greatly bolstered the morale of the masses.

On the part of Military Region 5, the An Lao victory signified a new transformation in advancing the guerrilla warfare movement to mobile warfare. "For the first time there has appeared in Military Region 5 the new operational mode of combining local troops with militia-guerrilla forces in the campaign form on a regimental scale" (Excerpt from a campaign recapitulation report of Military Region 5).

5 December 1964 to 8 March 1965: The Binh Gia campaign.

At the end of 1964 we had a very great opportunity: the enemy no longer could fully control their army, there were serious internal contradictions, and the morale of the lackey army was becoming weaker and weaker. But the enemy could temporarily

remain intact, mainly because they still had concentrated forces. At that time, furthermore, we were not yet sufficiently strong, especially militarily, because we did not yet make good use of our concentrated armed forces and thus were not yet able to annihilate a significant part of the enemy's main-force troops.

In order to take the strategic initiative and win a decisive victory, the Military Commission, launching our strong activities in 1965, decided to begin an activity campaign all over the southern theater in the first part of 1965.

The Central Office, South Vietnam [COSVN] launched an activity campaign throughout the South. The principal zone of operation, in which the region's main-force troops were concentrated, was an area which bordered four provinces in eastern Nam Bo -- Bien Hoa, Phuoc Tuy, Long Khanh, and Binh Tuy -- and was nearly 500 square kilometers in extent. It was situated about 60 kilometers south and southwest of Saigon and Bien Hoa and connected Nam Bo with Trung Bo.

The policy of the Regional Military Party Committee was: "Concentrating the armed forces of the region, along with the people and the local armed forces, in launching an activity campaign to carry out the first relatively large mobile warfare campaigns of the region during the winter and spring of 1964-1965 in the jungles-and-mountains area along the eastern Nam Bo coast."

The objectives of the activity campaign were to annihilate an important part of the enemy's manpower, consolidate and expand the base area and guerrilla area along the coast, promote a movement to selectively destroy the enemy's control network and pacification plan, and gain experience in all regards in order to provide operational guidance in the future and develop the concentrated combat style of the main-force troops.

That was a long-range activity campaign which utilized many operational forms, especially mobile warfare, military proselytization, and coordination in a large area of operations.

The forces that were used included the 1st and 2nd regional main-force regiments, in coordination with the local troops and the on-the-spot militia and guerrillas.

The campaign, which began on the night of 5 December 1964 and ended on 8 March 1965, was divided into three phases and included attacks on the Binh Gia strategic hamlet, the Dat Do Subsector, the Lo O and Rung La strongpoints, many ambushes of reinforcements and supply shipments on the Duc Thanh-Ba Ria road, and two battles against troops landed by helicopter around Binh Gia.

The results were that our troops annihilated 1,731 of the enemy (52 Americans were killed and 4 were wounded); captured 300 (including 3 Americans); wiped out two battalions (the 4th Marine Battalion and the 33rd Ranger Battalion), 2 armored squadrons, 2 Civil Guard companies, 2 commando platoons, and a number of Popular Force and Combat Youth units, and decimated 2 battalions (the 1st Battalion of the 37th Regiment and the 35th Ranger Battalion).

Shot down 35 helicopters, an L.19, and 2 Skyraiders.

Knocked out 22 M.113's, 5 tanks, 2 A, vehicles, 18 GMC trucks, and 2 Jeeps.

Captured 2 GMC's, 611 weapons of the various kinds, and 50,000 rounds of ammunition, and destroyed many weapons.

After that campaign, the enemy withdrew from Hoai Duc, Tanh Linh, and Vo Duc. We expanded our base area southeast of Rt. 20 in an area with a population of more than 20,000 and linked up the Ba Ria-Long Khanh and Binh Tuy guerrilla bases.

The Binh Gia victory not only had a great military significance but signified a great leap forward with regard to our main-force units' capability to fight with concentrated forces but had an important over-all effect on the war in the South.

Comrade Le Duan said, "In the developmental process of the liberation war in the South there have occurred such great leaps forward as the Binh Gia campaign during the winter and spring of 1964-1965," "After the Ap Bac battle the enemy realized that it would be difficult to defeat us" and "After Binh Gia the enemy realized that they could lose to us."

Comrade Vo Nguyen Giap observed that "The Binh Gia victory signified the essential defeat of the special war strategy."

The activity cycle of the winter and spring of 1964-1965, during which the Binh Gia campaign was the greatest victory, along with the An Lao, Song Be, Dong Xoai, and other victories and the guerrilla warfare movement all over the South, created an extremely favorable opportunity for the revolution in the South at the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965. Our repeated victories forced the U.S. to send a U.S. expeditionary army into South Vietnam and change over from the "special war" strategy to the "limited war" strategy in hopes of rescuing the puppets from the peril of complete collapse.

1964: The first U.S.-annihilating battles.

While the U.S. was increasing its forces in the South the revolutionary armed forces carried out many surprise attacks on U.S. lairs, above all those of the advisers and technical forces in the cities, especially in Saigon. Most noteworthy were the following attacks:

-- On 16 February there was an attack on the Kinh Do Theater in which 150 Americans were killed.

-- On 2 May the 15,000-ton aircraft carrier Card was sunk at the port of Saigon, killing 55 Americans and destroying 19 airplanes.

-- On 3 July we attacked the Play Mo Hong post, wiping out the first ranger battalion in the Central Highlands, killing 500 of the enemy including 9 U.S. advisers.

-- On 25 August we destroyed the fifth floor of the Caravelle Hotel, killing 100 Americans.

-- On 7 October we attacked three U.S. tankers on the Nha Be River, destroying 700,000 liters of gasoline.



-- On 1 November we mortared Bien Hoa Air Force Base, killing 4 Americans and destroying or damaging 13 B.57 bombers.

-- On 18 November we detonated a bomb in the Air Force club at Tan Son Nhat airfield, killing 77 Americans.

At the end of 1964, on 25 December, there was an attack on the Brinks Hotel, a six-story building in downtown Saigon. According to Westmoreland, 2 Americans were killed and more than 100 of the enemy were wounded, including 66 Americans.

#### First Half of 1965

7 February: The North launches a people's war against the war of destruction waged by the U.S. imperialists.

At the beginning of 1965 Johnson, having won the U.S. presidential election, was faced with the prospect of the complete collapse of the puppet administration in the South and plunged deeper along the path of direct aggression in our country. The U.S. imperialists strengthened their forces in the South while carrying out a war of destruction in the North, which they regarded as an indispensable part, a "supplement of, and not a replacement for, the U.S. land war in the South" (quote of McNamara). The specific U.S. objectives were:

-- Preventing all external aid from reaching the North and all aid from the North from reaching the South.

-- Destroying our economic and national defense potential and sabotaging the socialist construction in the North.

-- Threatening the morale of our people and shaking their determination to resist the U.S. for national salvation.

If it could attain those specific objective, the U.S. could bolster the puppet army and the puppet administration while also striking a blow against the socialist camp and intimidating the developing national liberation movement.

On 7 February 1965 Johnson, making the excuse of retaliating for our attack on a U.S. military camp at Play Cu, ordered the U.S. Air Force to begin operation Rolling Thunder and bomb the city of Dong Hoi, followed by the bombing of the Chap Le area north of Dong Hoi on 8 February. On 11 February the enemy, making the excuse of retaliating for our attack on a U.S. barracks in Quy Nhon, bombed our military camps at Chnh Hoa and Chap Le.

On 13 February Johnson decided to expand the attacks against the North into a war of destruction because "occasional one-for-one retaliatory strikes will lack the persuasiveness of continuous pressure."

In order to oppose the large-scale war of destruction launched by the air force and navy of the U.S. imperialists the soldiers and people of the North, under the leadership of the Party, waged a people's war based on the all-round strength of the superior socialist system. Many air defense units were urgently organized.



The various kinds of anti-aircraft guns, the air force units, the modern air-defense missiles, and the widely deployed low-altitude anti-aircraft teams of the self-defense militia, with determination to annihilate the enemy, fought very resourcefully and were victorious beginning with the very first battle.

We reoriented our economy. Many industrial bases evacuated their valuable machinery and important materials; the task of ensuring communications and transportation received special attention; the people's air defense task in the cities and industrial zones was carried out urgently and included such integrated measures as evacuation, dispersion, the building of additional air-raid shelters, the organization of air-defense sentries and alarms, etc.

Under the resolute, timely leadership of the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission, our people fought back, coped with the war of destruction of the U.S. imperialists very calmly, heroically, and resourcefully, won resounding victories, and limited damage to the minimum.

Although the enemy airforce and navy were far superior to ours numerically and were more modern, within only the first 3 months after the enemy escalated their attacks against the North from the 17th Parallel to the 20th Parallel, the soldiers and people of the North shot down more than 300 U.S. airplanes, captured many enemy pilots, and sunk or set afire 7 enemy warships and commando ships. During the first two days, 7 and 8 February 1965, Quang Binh and Vinh Linh shot down 9 U.S. airplanes. On 11 February they shot down 3 airplanes and damaged 4 others, and captured the "space pilot" Major Schumacker. On 15 March 1965 the militia of Dien Hung Village, Dien Chau District, Nghe An, shot down a U.S. A.4 aircraft with infantry weapons, thus beginning a movement among our people's armed forces to use infantry weapons to shoot down U.S. jets.

When they began their war of destruction against the North, the U.S. imperialists were clearly subjective with regard to the strength of their air force and its savagery. As Air Force General Le May said, "The air force is decisive, the instrument of victory; by means of our victory we can reach any target in the world. North Vietnam should be scared to death. If not, we will bomb them to smithereens and push North Vietnam back into the stone age. North Vietnam cannot bear up for more than a few weeks under U.S. bombs."

But the final results were entirely contrary to their aspirations. They could attain none of their objectives. They not only could not extricate themselves from their disaster on the southern battlefield but caused our people to hate them even more, to fight back with determination, and to quickly weaken the war-making potential of the U.S. imperialists. The U.S. Air Force suffered very heavy losses, the myth of the "unimaginable strength" of the U.S. Air Force was shattered, and its limitations, and weaknesses were exposed to the people of the world.

For our part, although the U.S. imperialists war of destruction created many difficulties and inflicted many losses on our people's resistance war in general and the soldiers and people of the North in particular, we won a heroic, glorious victory. As comrade Le Duan said, "We will emerge from this war not shattered but stronger and more solid. An army of workers will take form and science,

technology, and engineering will be developed in the rural areas because of our evacuation policy, for we are not evacuating and dispersing in order to flee but in order to produce and to fight the enemy."

25 to 27 March: Party Central Committee holds 11th Plenum.

During the first part of 1965 the patriotic war of our compatriots in the South won many victories.

In hopes of avoid the possibility of total defeat the U.S. imperialists obstinately sent U.S. and vassal fighting forces into South Vietnam, while also expanding their air force activities and their bombing attacks in the North, thus elevating the "special war" to a new level, so that it had the characteristics of a "limited war."

In view of that situation, the Party Central Committee held its 11th Plenum and issued a resolution on the situation and the urgent, immediate missions.

The Plenum observed: "Because of the plots and activities of the U.S. imperialists, the situation of half the country being at war and the other half being at peace has been transformed into a patriotic revolutionary war of the people of the entire nation against the U.S. imperialists. The South is still the great front line and the North is still the great rear area, but the mission of the North is to build while directly engaging in combat and aiding the front in the South.

"The most recent plots and acts of the enemy are intended to rescue them from their perilous situation in the South. Therefore, for our part, the most positive way to defeat those plots and acts of the enemy is to concentrate the forces of the entire nation and attack and defeat the enemy in the South."

The resolution confirmed that "our basic mission is to positively restrain and defeat the enemy in the 'special war' at its highest level in the South, endeavor to take advantage of opportunities, concentrate the forces of the entire nation to win a decisive defeat in the South in a relatively short period of time, while also making preparations to cope with and defeat the 'limited war' if waged by the enemy in the South, continuing to build the North, closely combining economic construction with the strengthening of national defense, resolutely protecting the North, defeating the war of destruction and blockade by the enemy's air force and navy, preparing to defeat the enemy in the event that they double the intensity of their present war of destruction or transform it into a limited war in both the South and the North, endeavoring to mobilize the forces of the North to aid the South, assisting the Laotian revolution, using all of our strength to attack the enemy in the South, defending the North, and fulfilling the enterprise of national liberation throughout the nation."

The resolution of the 11th Plenum of the Party Central Committee made very important decisions. It both expressed determination to restrain and defeat the enemy in the limited war and prepared the country to wage a large-scale war against the U.S. expeditionary army, delineated the basic missions and the specific missions of the country as a whole and of each region, maintained the initiative of the soldiers and people of our entire nation, and expressed readiness to

fight and defeat the enemy when they transformed their war of aggression into a limited war in the South and expanded their war of destruction in the North.

1 to 9 March: Indochinese People's Conference expresses a spirit of anti-U.S. solidarity.

In order to express solidarity against the U.S. and the plot of the U.S. imperialists to divide the people of the three Indochinese countries, the Indochinese People's Conference met in Phnom Penh, the capital of Kampuchea, from 1 March to 9 March 1965.

The conference included the participation of delegations of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Kampuchean Common People's Social Community, the Neo Lao Hach Xat, the Laotian Patriotic Neutral Forces, and other associations and organizations of the three countries. The conference approved a joint resolution which clearly stated the solidarity of the people of the three Indochinese countries in resolutely struggling against the U.S. imperialists, and three separate resolutions regarding Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos which expressed ardent support for the struggles of the people of the three countries for independence, the right of self-rule, and territorial integrity and vigorously condemning the U.S. imperialists for having trod upon the Geneva Agreements, started a criminal war of aggression against the Vietnamese people, intervening militarily in Laos, and carrying out provocations and aggressive plots against Kampuchea. The conference stressed "the necessity of strengthening the true, lasting solidarity of the Indochinese people" in the struggle against the common enemy: the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

The Indochinese People's Conference was an important event in the political life, and in the struggle for independence and freedom of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos. The victory of the conference was a victory of the militant solidarity of the people of the three Indochinese countries. The conference signified an important development in the history of the struggle of the three Indochinese countries against foreign aggression, and also signified a heavy defeat for the U.S. imperialists' plot to divide the Indochinese peoples in order to annex each of those countries.

3 April: Vietnamese People's Air Force makes the date of its first battle its tradition day.

In accordance with the policy of gradually developing our armed forces to a professional, modern status, our air force, a modern, young combat arm of the Vietnamese People's Army, was formed to fulfill the strategic missions of defending the North and liberating the South.

On 3 April 1965, during a battle against U.S. airplanes in the sky above Do Len-Ham Rong, our air force, in coordination with the anti-aircraft forces, shot down 10 enemy airplanes. The team led Pham Ngoc Lan shot down two F.8 jets in the first battle fought by our air force.

The next day, on 4 April, the team led by Tran Hanh shot down two F 105 jets in the same area.



President Ho Chi Minh sent a congratulatory letter to the People's Air Force units which had achieved the first feats of arms.

April 3rd, 1965 has become the tradition day of the Vietnam People's Air Force.

During 10 years of contending with the modern air force and navy of the U.S. imperialists, our People's Air Force built a glorious tradition: "Be limitlessly loyal, attack resolutely, fight together, and achieve collective merit." In more than 300 battles it shot down 320 U.S. airplanes of 19 types (including 2 B.52's), destroyed 24 airplanes, sunk or set afire 6 warships or commando ships, heavily damaged 3 enemy military bases, and contributed worthily to smashing the prestige of "American air power," along with the soldiers and people of the entire nation defeated two wars of aggression waged by the U.S. imperialists against the North, and contributed to the defeat of their neocolonial war of aggression in the South. One regiment shot down more than 100 airplanes, one company shot down more than 60 airplanes, and many pilots achieved outstanding feats of arms. Most outstanding was the feat of arms of 27 and 28 December 1972, when the People's Air Force shot down five enemy airplanes (including two B.52's shot down on the spot), thus contributing to smashing the enemy's large-scale air raids on Hanoi and Hai Phong.

In the General Offensive and Uprising of the Spring of 1975 the People's Air Force, overcoming many difficulties, transported a large quantity of weapons and military cargo to the battlefield in order to promptly serve the fighting. It quickly took over, studied, repaired, restored, and use the various kinds of airplanes and technical equipment of the enemy.

On 28 April 1975 the Quyet Thang squadron, with 5 A.37 jets, carried out a bold surprise attack on the area in which enemy airplanes were parked at Tan Son Nhat airbase, destroyed 24 airplanes and contributing to the total victory of the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign. It effectively supported the infantry and naval units in the fighting to liberate the islands in the South China Sea.

The National Assembly and Government awarded the Vietnam People's Air Force the designation Hero Unit of the People's Armed Forces on 3 June 1976. Ten units and 22 cadres and men in the Air Force were awarded the noble designation Hero of the People's Armed Forces.

22 March and 8 April: National Liberation Front of South Vietnam makes public its Five-Point Stand and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam makes public its Four-Point Stand.

At the beginning of 1965, in addition to beginning to send U.S. expeditionary troops into South Vietnam and expanding the war of destruction in the North, Johnson expanded his "peace offensive" to conceal the brazen crime of aggression committed by the U.S. and send out a smokescreen of lies regarding their "good will" in order to both deceive world opinion and threaten our people.

Johnson continually spoke of "negotiations without any prior conditions" and said that "America does not want a wider war .... We have acted and will continue to act to reduce tension."



On 7 April 1965 Johnson read a speech at Baltimore in which he said, "We will seek ways to prevent the conflict from spreading .... We will do anything necessary to attain that objective." In that speech he both appealed for negotiations and offered a bribe in the form of \$1 billion in aid if the war ended, i.e. if it ended in accordance with the conditions set by the U.S.

In view of that situation, on 22 March 1965 the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issued an important declaration. After exposing the bogus offer of the U.S. to "negotiate without any preconditions," the Front brought out its just Five-Point Stand of the People of South Vietnam:

1. The U.S imperialists sabotaged the Geneva Agreements and are extremely crude warmongers and aggressors. They are the irreconcilable enemies of the Vietnamese people.
2. The heroic people of South Vietnam are determined to expel the U.S. imperialists in order to liberate the South, achieve an independent, democratic, neutral Vietnam, and advance to national unification.
3. The people of South Vietnam and the heroic Liberation Army of the South are determined to fulfill their sacred duty as fully as possible and expel the U.S. imperialists in order to liberate the South and defend the North.
4. The people of South Vietnam express their deep gratitude for the ardent support of the peace loving and justice loving people of the world, and declare their readiness to accept all assistance, including weapons and all other military equipment, from our friends all over the world.
5. Our entire population is united and armed, will continue to heroically rush forward, and are determined to fight and defeat the U.S. and the Vietnamese traitors.

Then, on 8 April 1965, Premier Pham Van Dong announced the Four-Point Stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam:

1. The U.S. is the aggressor and must withdraw from South Vietnam.
2. The U.S. must respect the Geneva Agreements.
3. The affairs of the South must be handled by the people of the South, and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is the only true representative of the people of the South.
4. The peaceful unification of Vietnam must be brought about by the people of the two regions.

The declaration of the Five-Point Stand of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the declaration of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were resolute, just responses of our people which exposed the reactionary, wily arguments of the U.S. imperialists regarding Vietnam.

They affirmed the iron determination to oppose the U.S. for national salvation of the people of North and South Vietnam. We were unwilling to yield to the strength of the enemy aggressors and could not accept negotiations according to the U.S. conditions.

The people of the South and North responded ardently to the two declarations by means of bolts of lightning struck directly against the enemy. They also received the wide support of progressive world opinion, which regarded our stands as manifesting the most patriotic and heroic attitude and as being in accord with the truth of the era.

10 and 11 May: Taking of Song Be City, capital of Phuoc Long Province.

The city of Song Be, also called Ba Ra, was the capital of Phuoc Long Province in eastern Nam Bo.

On the basis of the favorable topography afforded by Mt. Ba Ra and the Ba River, the U.S. and its puppets constructed a solid defensive system which extended from Mt. Ba Ra, through the provincial capital to the airfield, and on to the Phuoc Binh military subsector headquarters, a distance of more than 10 kilometers, which formed a rather strong complex of strongpoints.

On the night of 10 March and the morning of 11 March our troops smashed the enemy's defensive line along the Be River, wiped out the Phuoc Binh military headquarters and the Phuoc Long sector, annihilated 1,389 of the enemy (including 30 Americans and the puppet province chief), shot down 14 airplanes, and captured 700 weapons.

The Song Be victory was the first battle of the Song Be-Dong Xoai campaign. For the first time we had taken a city occupied by the enemy in the south. The battle panicked the U.S. and its puppets and opened the way for the campaign to win a great victory.

28 May: The Nui Thanh victory.

At the end of March 1965 U.S. troops occupied Da Nang-Chu Lai and U.S. Marines began to arrive to set up a base camp in Military Region 5 in order to make preparations for the U.S. troops to expand their sphere of operations on land.

On 7 May, a battalion of U.S. Marines occupied the An Tan area in Tam Ky District, Quang Nam Province.

During the night of 27 May and the early morning of 28 May two Military Region 5 battalions, in coordination with a battalion of sappers, carried out an attack against the U.S. Marine battalion. In that battle at Nui Thanh a company of U.S. Marines was wiped out and 180 Americans were killed or wounded.

The battle at Nui Thanh was the first battle in which our revolutionary armed forces wiped out a U.S. company on the southern battlefield. Military Region 5 had the honor of being praised by the Party and government for: "Heroically and steadfastly leading the way in annihilating U.S. troops." There followed the

victories at Van Tuong and Play Me, in which the U.S. troops suffered a terrible beating.

29 to 31 May: The Ba Gia Victory.

Ba Gia was a small town in Son Tinh District on Route 5, more than 10 kilometers from Quang Ngai City.

The Ba Gia victory lay within the summer 1965 activity cycle of Military Region 5, which was aimed at the enemy's weak points and had the objectives of annihilating part of the enemy's manpower, effectively support the people, further promote the political struggle movement, develop the guerrilla war, continue to destroy the enemy's control, and consolidate and expand the liberated area.

We used an infantry regiment, a 75mm pack artillery company, and an anti-aircraft company, to attack a larger puppet brigade consisting of the 51st Regiment of the 2nd Division, two Marine battalions, and three Ranger battalions.

Our troops attacked the enemy continuously, from 0100 hours 29 May to 0400 hours 31 May. The attacks included many ambushes, both daytime and night time surprise attacks, attacking posts in order to annihilate reinforcements, and annihilating reinforcements in order to attack larger reinforcements.

The results were that our troops wiped out four enemy battalions (the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 51st Regiment, a Marine battalion, and the 39th Ranger Battalion), killed or wounded 915 of the enemy (including 6 Americans), captured 270, captured 307 weapons of the various kinds, shot down 2 airplanes, and destroyed 2 105mm artillery pieces and 14 trucks.

Ba Gia was a rapid and efficient annihilating battle. It was a new step in the maturation of the revolutionary armed forces of the South with regard to the level of concentrated fighting and the use of relatively large forces, in a period in which the enemy's "special war" strategy was reaching the point of bankruptcy and in which the puppet army, because of the repeated blows struck by our main-force troops at such places as Binh Gia, An Lao, and Dong Xoai-Song Be, was threatened by collapse and disintegration.

Comrade Nguyen Chi Thanh wrote of the Ba Gia battle: "For the first time, on unfavorable terrain and, especially, under the circumstances of the enemy having manpower and firepower, we not only dared fight, but annihilated all of the enemy, captured many prisoners, and captured many weapons and much military equipment, while our side suffered only very light casualties." "The Ba Gia victory has not only the ordinary significance any victory but also has another important significance: it was an exemplary annihilating battle."

The Ba Gia battle demonstrated our troops' ability to annihilate brigades of the puppet army and signified the complete bankruptcy of the U.S.-puppet "special war" strategy. On 1 June 1965 Johnson, the U.S. President, had to bitterly admit that "That was a serious defeat" for himself and his lackeys.

June 1965: Formation of the "Anti-U.S., National-Salvation Assault Youth Unit."

In mid-1965 the war spread throughout our country.

In order to strengthen our forces, in June 1965 the Premier recommended the formation of an "Anti-U.S., National Salvation Assault Youth Unit" to mobilize hundreds of thousands of young men and women to set out to fulfill combat and combat support missions. Most of them would work in the communications-and-transportation units in order to carry out the October 1965 directive of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee: "Ensuring unimpeded communications and transportation in the present situation is a central, ad hoc mission of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population."

During the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, on all of the key battlefields, especially in Military Region 4 and along the strategic north-south corridor, the "Anti-U.S. National Salvation Assault Youth Unit" played a positive role in fulfilling combat and combat-support units, alongside the regular armed forces. Those accomplishments reflect the patriotic tradition of our youths: when the homeland appeals to them youths are willing go anywhere, do anything, and overcome all difficulties.

11 May to 22 July: Dong Xoai-Song Be campaign.

During the winter and spring of 1964-1965 we had won a great victory and had to attack rapidly and strongly so that the enemy could not recover.

The Regional Military Committee decided to launch a campaign to:

- Annihilate an important part of the enemy's elite main-force manpower (the quota that was set was the complete annihilation of four battalions and eight companies).
- Attacking, and interdicting for a certain period of time, the enemy's strategic routes: route Nos. 13, 14, 20, 1, and 15 and the railroad.
- Stepping up guerrilla warfare and fighting small-scale attrition and annihilation battles, in combination with the political struggle movement of the masses.

The principal mission was to annihilate enemy manpower.

That was the first time we concentrated relatively large main-force units (four regiments and two battalions), in coordination with the local forces, to carry out an operation in a large area which focused on Binh Long and Phuoc Long provinces. The area of coordination was made up of five provinces: Lam Dong, Binh Tuy, Long Khanh, Bien Hoa, and Ba Ria. During the period between 11 May to 22 July 1965 we attacked a rather strong defensive zone defended by relatively large forces (nine regular battalions, three Ranger battalions, two Civil Guard battalions, seven independent Civil Guard companies, and 21 ranger companies, not to mention the puppet general reserves).



The campaign was divided into three phases, during which we fought 16 battalion-sized or regiment-sized battles, including 4 victorious battles against enemy in strong fortifications, 4 battles against reinforcements (2 of which were successful ), five battles to interdict roads, and 3 victorious surprise attacks.

The results were that we wiped out 4 enemy military subsectors, knocked out of action 4,459 of the enemy (including 73 Americans), wiped out or nearly wiped out 4 battalions (the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 7th Regiment, the 7th Airborne Regiment, and the 4th Armored Battalion), 24 companies, 6 mechanized squadrons, and 4 artillery or combat engineer detachments. We captured 1,652 weapons of the various kinds and destroyed 390 weapons and 60 vehicles, 6 locomotives, and 12 railroad cars. We shot down 34 airplanes and destroyed 3 helicopters.

We also achieved good results in stepping up guerrilla warfare and in interdicting roads. Most noteworthy was the coming of age of the main-force troops, especially with regard to attacking the enemy in strong fortifications. The level of our campaign guidance was raised. The enthusiasm and confidence of the troops were higher after the campaign.

The Dong Xoai campaign, which followed the Binh Gia and Ba Gia victories, proved our troops' ability to attack the enemy on an increasingly larger scale and to annihilate increasingly larger numbers of the enemy.

The Dong Xoai victory pushed the puppet army a step further toward the peril of collapse and disintegration. It also proved the correctness of the assessment that the jungles-and-mountains battlefield is a battlefield on which we were capable of fighting and winning large annihilating battles and of limiting the strengths, and exacerbating the weaknesses, of the enemy.

1965: The Chinese rulers give the green light to U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

In January 1965, via the U.S. journalist Edgar Snow Mao Zedong informed Washington: "The Chinese army will not cross its border to fight. That is something that is absolutely clear. The Chinese will fight only if the U.S. attacks. Is that not clear? The Chinese are very busy with their internal affairs. To fight outside their borders would be criminal. Why would they have to do so? The people of South Vietnam can handle the situation."

After that, in many ways China made effort to enable the U.S. to understand Mao's saying, "We won't bother anyone who doesn't bother us."

Therefore, in February 1965 the Johnson administration began to use the enormous U.S. war apparatus in Vietnam. It sent U.S. troops into the South to wage a "limited war," while at the same time using its air force to wage a war of destruction against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Thus the Chinese rulers exposed their intricate, insidious scheme of instigating the U.S. to become bogged down in its war of aggression in Vietnam so they could be free to carry out their cultural revolution. They also wanted to prolong the Vietnam War to weaken the Vietnamese revolutionary forces. At the same time, they wanted to take advantage of their so-called "aid to Vietnam" as long as

possible so that they could raise the flag of "absolute revolution" and rally the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America against the Soviet Union and the socialist system.

### Chapter III

From Mid-1965 to the End of 1968

Mobilizing the Forces of the Entire Nation and Carrying Out the Strategic Decision to Defeat the U.S. Expeditionary Army in the "Limited War" and Force the U.S. Imperialists to Deescalate the War

Last 6 months of 1965.

24 July: The missile troops fight and win their first battle.

The air-defense missile combat arm, a young, modern technical combat arm of the Vietnam People's Army, was born and grew up in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

After expanding the war of destruction to most of the provinces in the north the U.S. imperialists, although heavily defeated, continued to be very subjective and blind regarding the "unimaginable strength" of "U.S. airpower."

In mid-July 1965 the High Command decided to transfer two missile battalions to join three anti-aircraft regiments in carrying out a surprise attack to shoot down enemy airplanes in the area of Bat Bat, Ha Tay Province. That was the first battle fought by our anti-aircraft missile army. The results were that on 24 July our missile troops, with resourceful, brave, and resolute fighting methods, won a glorious victory, shooting down a flight of three enemy F-4 jets. Since then, 24 July 1965 has been regarded as the tradition day of our army's missile arm.

Between 1965 and 1972 our missile troops shot down more than 800 airplanes of many types of the U.S. strategic and tactical air forces, including 57 B-52's. In one battle one missile brought down two airplanes, in another battle three missiles shot down three airplanes, and on one day eight strategic B-52 bombers were shot down.

Especially, between 18 and 28 December 1972 they fought very skilfully, bravely, and creatively, achieved one glorious feat of arms after another, won a very great victory -- shooting down 37 U.S. airplanes, including 32 B-52's, most of them on the spot -- and contributed very importantly to defeating the large-scale strategic raids against the North carried out by the strategic and tactical air forces of the U.S. imperialists.

Our missile troops contributed importantly to, along with our soldiers and people, completely defeating the two wars of destruction waged by the U.S. imperialists in the North.

On 11 January 1973 the National Assembly and the Government bestowed the Heroic Unit of the People's Armed Forces commendation on the missile combat arm. Twelve

units and 10 cadres and men were awarded the Hero of the People's Armed Forces designation.

1965: The U.S. imperialists impetuously send in U.S. expeditionary troops to directly wage an aggressive "limited war" in South Vietnam.

By March 1965 "the revolutionary patriotic war of our compatriots in the South had advanced very rapidly and had won increasingly larger victories. The 'special war' of the U.S. imperialists was undergoing an increasingly deeper crisis and is suffering a serious defeat." (Resolution of the 11th Plenum of the Party Central Committee.)

Faced with the peril of complete defeat, the U.S. imperialists sought all ways to create a "position of strength." They gradually sent U.S. and vassal forces to South Vietnam, while also expanding their air force activities and bombings in the North in order to create pressure, in hopes of weakening our offensive capability in the South, limiting the North's aid to the South, and forcing us to make concessions.

On 8 March 1965, after sending a squadron of F105 aircraft to Bien Hoa and a battalion of "Hawk" anti-aircraft missiles to Da Nang, the U.S. sent two battalions of the U.S. 9th Marine Brigade from Okinawa to Da Nang. Thus for the first time U.S. combat troops were sent to South Vietnam.

On 1 April 1965 Johnson decided to send 18,000 to 20,000 U.S. support troops and two additional Marine battalions to South Vietnam. He urgently explored the possibility of rapidly deploying South Korean, Australian, and New Zealand combat forces and continued to step up the war of aggression waged by the U.S. Air Force in the North and in Laos.

In view of the weakening situation of the puppet army, on 26 June 1965 Westmoreland was authorized by the U.S. government to send U.S. troops into battle "when deemed necessary." Between 26 and 30 June the 173rd Airborne Brigade, an Australian battalion, and puppet forces carried out a joint operation northwest of Saigon. That was the first operation conducted by U.S. troops in the South. With that decision (according to a classified Department of Defense document), "The strategy was finished, and the debate from then on centered on how much force and to what end."

On 17 July 1965, Johnson announced his decision to send 44 U.S. battalions to South Vietnam and approve Westmoreland's "search and destroy" strategy. That decision (according to a classified Department of Defense document), was "perceived as a threshold-entrance into an Asian land war," and the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists entered a new phase: the limited war phase.

The U.S. imperialists, waging a gradually intensifying limited war, thought that they would be able to squash us and win victory. The ultimate developments were entirely contrary to their desires.

Of course, that period presented an extremely serious challenge to the soldiers and people in both the North and South of our country, as well as for our Party. By means of their extraordinary courage our people proved that although our country

was not large and our population was small, our people were united. Under the wise, correct leadership of the Party, they carried out a broad people's war and defeated that fierce, cruel war waged by the U.S. imperialists.

1965: Main-force divisions organized in Nam Bo and Military Region 5.

During the last half of 1965 our main-force troops on the Nam Bo and Military Region 5 battlefields developed greatly with regard to organization and operational ability, formed clusters of main-force units which stalwartly held their ground in the important strategic areas, launched a number of multi-regimental operations under unified command, and operated in areas of their choosing, such as Binh Gia and Dong Xoai. Now our operational objectives were different from those of the past. In addition to the puppet troops there had appeared regular U.S. divisions with modern equipment. That situation made it necessary for us to have main-force divisions if we were to meet the requirements of the battlefield.

According to the September 1965 resolution of the Political Bureau and the directive of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, a number of main-force infantry divisions were formed:

--In Nam Bo the 9th Division (three regiments) was formed in September 1965 and the 5th Division was formed in November 1965.

--In Military Region 5 the 3rd Division (three regiments) was formed in September 1965 and the 2nd Division (two regiments and one battalion) was formed in November 1965.

The formation of main-force infantry divisions on the southern battlefield was a strong developmental step of our nation's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation and represented the great-leap-forward maturation of the revolutionary armed forces, which were now capable of creating strong, highly effective fists which, along with the local troops, the militia, and the guerrillas, transformed the war situation.

1965: We win resounding victories over the U.S. expeditionary troops when they begin their aggressive limited war in our country.

18 August: The Van Tuong victory.

After occupying the Chu Lai area in Quang Nam Province, at dawn on 18 August 1965 the U.S. Marines launched Operation Starlight against the hamlet of Van Tuong, in Binh Hai Village, Binh Son District, on the coast in northern Quang Ngai, 17 kilometers from the Chu Lai base. Its objectives were to annihilate one of our main-force units, win a military victory in order to enhance the prestige of the U.S. Marines, encroach upon the liberated area, and expand the secure area around the Chu Lai base.

The enemy force, amounting to about 9,000, consisted of the headquarters of the 7th Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, four Marine battalions, two puppet infantry battalions, a tank-amphibious vehicle battalion, and a number of artillery, engineer, and other support units. They mobilized six landing craft, five combat



support ships, 105 tanks and armored vehicles, 100 helicopters, and 70 fighter-bombers in that sweeping operation.

We had one regiment in the Van Tuong area which was training, consolidating, and preparing to fulfill its missions. It had a contingency plan for countering a sweeping operation launched from many directions.

A few days previously the enemy had made preparations by the use of airplanes, artillery, and small exploratory mopping-up operations. We predicted that the enemy would attack and decided to remain in place to fight the enemy's mopping-up operation.

The U.S. troops carried out the attack with four columns: one advanced directly along the road in amphibious vehicles, two were landed by helicopter, and one came ashore from landing craft. After a day's fighting our troops, along with the guerrillas and the people, completely defeated the mopping-up operation, killing 919, set afire 22 tanks and armored vehicles, and shot down 13 airplanes.

Van Tuong was the first battle in which the U.S. expeditionary troops engaged directly in large-scale combat in South Vietnam and used naval, land, and air forces, but they took a beating and suffered heavy losses.

Van Tuong may be regarded as the Ap Bac of the U.S. Army. It began a high tide of the annihilation of U.S. troops all over the south. The Van Tuong victory also demonstrated that the soldiers and people of the south were determined to fight, knew how to fight, and were entirely capable of defeating the limited war of the U.S. imperialists.

Comrade Le Duan evaluated the Van Tuong battle as representing both a tactical defeat and a strategic defeat of the U.S., on the basis of which we could continue to victoriously attack the U.S. mobile forces. When it is compared to the situation when the German troops invaded the Soviet Union or when Japan attacked China during World War II, or when the U.S. troops landed in South Korea, the significance of that smashing victory over the aggressor troops becomes even clearer.

19 October to 26 November: The Play-Me Campaign.

In September 1965 the enemy stationed the entire 1st Air Cavalry Division at An Khe. It was the first U.S. military unit to be sent to the Central Highlands and was the first modernly equipped U.S. army unit to carry out tactical experiments in the South of our country.

The enemy forces included one U.S. air cavalry division, a puppet airborne brigade and a puppet armored squadron, and a South Korean regiment (the first Park Chung Hy soldiers to be sent to the Central Highlands).

Our troops included three main-force infantry regiments, a sapper battalion, an artillery battalion, and a 12.7 mm machinegun battalion. The campaign took place in the Bau Can-Play Me-Duc Co area, about 1,600 square kilometers in extent, 30 kilometers south of Play Cu City.

Between 19 October and 26 November our troops surrounded the area to force the puppet army to send reinforcements, concentrated on annihilating the puppet reinforcements, and forced the U.S. troops to come to the rescue of the puppets. We then concentrated on inflicting heavy casualties on the U.S. troops.

The results were that we killed 2,964 of the enemy (including 1,700 Americans), wiped out three infantry battalions, including a U.S. battalion, and annihilated a puppet armored squadron. We shot down 59 airplanes, inflicted heavy casualties on the U.S. 3rd Brigade, destroyed five 105mm artillery pieces, and captured 73 weapons and 58,000 rounds of ammunition.

That was the first time the U.S. sent troops to the Central Highlands and also a time when they had to call off an operation. The air Cavalry Division was defeated in its first engagement.

The High Command sent a message congratulating the soldiers and people of the Central Highlands. The Government decided to award the soldiers and peasants of the Central Highlands two First-Class Military Merit medals.

8 November: Victory at Dat Cuoc.

Dat Cuoc, 30 kilometers north of the city of Bien Hoa, lay within the sphere of War Zone D in eastern Nam Bo.

The U.S. 173rd Brigade, which had been stationed at Bien Hoa since May 1965, sought to win a victory by carrying out a "search and destroy" operation and probing into War Zone D.

On 6 November they landed troops at Hieu Liem. After 2 days of fruitless searching for us, when they were beginning to tire, they entered our ambush zone. The fighting lasted until 8 November.

The results were that a U.S. battalion was wiped out. That was the first large U.S.-annihilating battle fought in Nam Bo.

12 November to 27 November: The Dau Tieng battle.

Dau Tieng is an area in Thu Dau Mot. The enemy forces included a U.S. infantry division and the 7th Regiment of the puppet 5th Division. Our 9th Infantry Division and a battalion of local Thu Dau Mot troops carried out an operation in which they fought many battles -- all of them victorious -- in a 15-day period. Two of those battles, in which we annihilated many of the enemy, had a great effect: Bau Bang and Dau Tieng.

The Bau Bang victory:

On 11 November U.S. forces, consisting of a task force made up of two infantry battalions of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, two battalions of tanks and M-113's, and an artillery battery, totalling more than 2,000 men, conducted an operation from Lai Khe to Bau Bang. On the afternoon of 11 November the enemy stopped at Bau Bang, 25 kilometers north of Thu Dau Mot.

We closely monitored the enemy's situation. During the night of 11 November our troops moved up close and surrounded the bivouac area of the U.S. troops.

At 0530 on 12 November we opened fire. After 30 minutes, most of the U.S. troops had been wiped out. After 3 hours of fighting we completely mastered the battlefield. The results were that we annihilated two U.S. infantry battalions and a mechanized squadron. About 2,040 Americans were killed or wounded. We destroyed 39 tanks and M.113's 6 105mm artillery pieces, and 2 106.7mm mortars, and shot down an L.19 airplane and a helicopter.

That was a daytime attack which resulted in the largest number of Americans killed since U.S. troops arrived in the South and in the wiping out of many battalions, both infantry and armor. That proved our troops' capability to fight battles to annihilate large numbers of U.S. troops.

#### The Dau Tieng victory:

On 27 November we launched a surprise attack against the command headquarters of the 7th Regiment of the puppet 5th Division and two battalions of that regiment at Village 14 in the Michelin rubber plantation. The entire regiment was wiped out and we killed or captured more than 700 of the enemy, including a Lieutenant Colonel who was the regimental commander.

The results of the Dau Tieng campaign were that we annihilated 4,250 of the enemy (including nearly 3,000 Americans), destroyed 300 vehicles, captured 300 weapons of the various kinds, and knocked out of action three battalions of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division and the 7th Regiment of the puppet 5th Division.

The victory of the Dau Tieng victory was another heavy blow struck against the U.S. puppet forces in the winter of 1965 and buried the prestige of the "Big Red One" 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, which they ballyhooed as being their most "elite" division.

#### 8 to 18 December: The offensive at Dong Duong.

Dong Duong is situated in a lowland area along Route 1 in southern Quang Ngai Province, near such large U.S. bases as Da Nang and Chu Lai.

On 17 November, prior to that campaign, we attacked and wiped out the Hiep Duc. On 18 November the puppet 2nd Division landed three battalions by helicopter to retake Hiep Duc.

We then surrounded Hiep Duc and Viet An, forcing the U.S. and the puppets to relieve the siege and affording us an opportunity to attack the reinforcements. As expected, the enemy mobilized six puppet infantry battalions, for U.S. Marine battalions, two artillery battalions, and an armored squadron, totalling 8,500 men, to rescue the puppets at Hiep Duc and Viet An.

The fighting took place from 8 to 18 December 1965 and included many ambushes, surprise attacks, and attacks on enemy troops landing by helicopter. At first we mainly fought puppet troops, but later we mainly annihilated Americans. The

results were that we annihilated 1,800 of the enemy (including 600 Americans), knocked out of action three puppet infantry battalions and a battalion of U.S. Marines, and shot down or destroyed 21 airplanes and 6 M.113's.

The Dong Duong victory was a great success of the armed forces of Military Region 5 in the application of the slogan of endeavoring to annihilate enemy troops carrying out operations in the lowlands, combining mobile warfare with guerrilla fighting, and closely combining the three types of troops.

4 December: Raid on the Metropole Hotel (Saigon).

In the winter of 1965, along with the concentrated fighting of our main-force troops we used sappers and artillery to attack the enemy's rear-area bases in the Saigon area, the Nuoc Man airbase, the Chu Lai air base, etc. Of those raids by our sappers, the raid on the Metropole Hotel on the night of 4 December, in which 200 Americans were killed, caused the greatest repercussions of all.

The continuous attacks by our soldiers and people during the fall and winter of 1975, including the victories at Van Tuong, Play Me, Dat Cuoc, Bau Bang, Dau Tieng, Dong Duong, etc., the bold attacks of our sappers on the very lairs of the U.S. troops, and our strong activities in the U.S.-annihilating zones at Cu Chi, Lai Thieu, Ben Cat, Chu Lai, Da Nang, and An Khe, inflicted heavy defeats on the U.S. troops. They cockily jumped into the South with 200,000 troops but were unable to transform the situation, prevent the decline of the puppet army and administration, or avoid the bankruptcy of the plan to herd people into "strategic hamlets." Indeed, it was they who were bogged down on the vast battlefield of people's war, were attacked everywhere, and were attacked in many ways they could not foresee.

December 1969: The Party Central Committee holds its 12th Plenum.

After the 11th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in May 1965 the situation in the South changed very rapidly. Faced with the collapse of its "special war," the U.S. obstinately sent U.S. expeditionary troops and vassal troops to the South. By September 1965 the number of U.S. and vassal troops in the South had risen to 200,000, not counting 70,000 U.S. naval and air force personnel at the U.S. bases in Guam, the Philippines, and Thailand and with the 7th Fleet, who also participated directly in the fighting in Vietnam. The U.S. war of aggression became a limited war.

In view of that situation, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met in September 1965 and issued a resolution regarding the major, urgent problems in order to lead the resistance war of our people in the South.

By the end of 1965, despite continuous defeats and heavy losses the U.S. imperialists, because of their extremely obstinate nature, were continuing to promote and expand their limited war in the South and escalate their attacks against the north.

In December 1965 the Party Central Committee held its 12th Plenum to determine missions, policies, and slogans that were appropriate to the new situation, and



to mobilize the entire nation to resolutely defeat the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists.

The Plenum unanimously approved the September 1965 resolution of the Political Bureau while also, on the basis of the actual events of the half-year test-of-strength between our soldiers and people and the U.S. troops, profoundly analyzed the situation and reached new, extremely important conclusions.

The principal characteristic was that although the U.S. had sent in troops to directly commit aggression in our country, their objective was still to "continue to carry out a neocolonial policy," and the basic nature of the U.S. war in the South was still that of a "new-style" colonial war of aggression in which the U.S. imperialists were "using two forces: the U.S. expeditionary army and the forces of the puppet army and administration." "In the past the war was limited to the sphere of the South, but now the U.S. is both concentrating its forces on the southern battlefield and expanding the war of aggression waged by its air force in the North of our country, thus creating the situation of the entire nation being at war with the U.S., to different degrees."

Due to the important position of South Vietnam and the extremely barbarous, aggressive nature of the U.S. imperialists, in the future they may increase the number of U.S. troops in the South to between 300,000 and 400,000 and intensify their attacks against the North, but their present plot was to "endeavor to expand their attacks in order to annihilate our forces, especially our concentrated armed forces; maintain and consolidate, the important strategic positions, or occupy new ones, then on that basis carry out selective 'pacification', attack the liberated areas, control the masses, retake some of the areas that were lost, and take all steps to stop the aid from the North, and surround and isolate the southern battlefield, while also stepping up the war of aggression against the North of our country. They want to gradually regain the initiative and create a position of strength in order to force us to negotiate in accordance with conditions advantageous to them, while also preparing bases so that, when necessary, they can prolong and expand the war of aggression."

The U.S. imperialists had the strongest economic and military potential in the imperialist camp. They had a large army, strong firepower, rapid mobility, and bases at a number of important strategic positions, but had many weaknesses, the most basic of which had always been political.

The carrying out of a passive, unjust war prevented the U.S. from using all of their economic and military strength. The will to fight of the U.S. soldiers was very weak. The U.S. strategy wavered between offense and defense, between holding land and moving around. Its rear area was far away and supply was difficult, and the fighting was not appropriate to the training, organization, and equipment of the U.S. forces, who were forced to fight in the way dictated by the opposition.

For our part, the Party Central Committee affirmed that "Under the wise leadership of our Party, our people have created forces that are great in all respects and are now in a favorable situation." That evaluation was based on an all-round, profound analysis of the development of the revolution in both the South and the North.

In the world, the just struggle of the Vietnamese people in both parts of our country gained the increasingly positive support and strong assistance of the socialist camp, the nationalist countries, and the peace-loving people, including the U.S. people.

On the basis of that analysis, the Party Central Committee reached the following conclusions: "Even if the U.S. imperialists send hundreds of thousands of expeditionary troops, the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy will not appreciably change."

Therefore, the revolution in the South "must maintain and develop its offensive strategic status," and even if the war becomes increasingly arduous and fierce, our people have a firm basis on which to maintain the initiative on the battlefield, with sufficient forces and capabilities with which to defeat the enemy's short-range and long-range plots.

The Party Central Committee set forth the mission of "Mobilizing the entire nation to resolutely defeat the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists under any circumstances in order to defend the North, liberate the South, and complete the people's democratic national revolution throughout the country." "The present mission of opposing the U.S. for national salvation is clearly a sacred mission of our nation and our people in both the South and the North."

On the basis of the above directions and missions, the Central Committee set forth the following slogan: "Endeavor to limit the enemy's war and defeat the enemy in that limited war, inflict heavy casualties on them, and force them to become bogged down and heavily defeated. If that is done we are certain to win a decisive victory in the South."

Our strategic motto was to fight a protracted war and rely principally on our own strength, while also, on the basis of waging a protracted war, going all-out to highly concentrate the forces of both regions in order to take advantage of the opportunity in order to win a decisive victory on the southern battlefield in a relatively short period of time. At the same time, we still had to prepare to defeat the enemy in the event that the war was prolonged and was extended to the entire nation. We also had to try to win international sympathy, support, and aid, a factor which would contribute decisively to our people's victory. Therefore, we had to carry out a diplomatic struggle.

Regarding the struggle motto, the resolution affirmed that it was necessary to combine persistent military struggle with political struggle, and make full use of the attack columns.

The Party Central Committee made the following appeal: "We are waging the greatest patriotic war in the history of our country, a revolutionary war to liberate the nation, defend and build socialism, and contribute to the struggle of the world's people for peace, national independence, and socialism. Therefore, in the present glorious phase of the history of the homeland we must "have a strong fighting spirit, extraordinary courage, a heroic spirit, and determination to move mountains and fill the seas, overcome all obstacles, fulfill all missions, and defeat all enemies."

The resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Central Committee was a very important historical document with regard to theory as well as practice in our people's revolutionary struggle against the U.S. imperialists. With an absolute revolutionary spirit, our Party very scientifically evaluated the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy, correctly evaluated the weaknesses of the U.S. imperialists, even when they were escalating the war and clamorously sending troops to the South, resolutely set forth an offensive strategy, and affirmed that our people could defeat, and had a way of defeating, the U.S. imperialists, the leader of world imperialism.

Speaking at a conference of cadres studying the Resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, comrade Le Duan evaluated it as being "a historic resolution. It manifests in a concentrated manner our people's spirit of several thousand years' standing. It crystallizes the resolute will, intelligence, and great creativity of our people in the present phase, and will leave behind for our posterity thousands of years hence one of the most glorious pages of history."

1966

3 to 15 January: The Asian, African, and Latin American People's Solidarity Conference supports the struggle of the Vietnamese people against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

In order to affirm their resolute support for the just stand and iron determination of our people and promote the enterprise of resistance to the U.S. for national salvation, the Asian, African, and Latin American People's Solidarity Conference met at Havana, the capital of Cuba, a free land in the Western Hemisphere and the leading flag of the anti-imperialist revolutionary movement in that Hemisphere.

The Conference regarded solidarity with Vietnam and "defending the just enterprise of the Vietnamese people as the central missions of the revolutionary struggle of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples."

It unanimously observed that "The struggle of the Vietnamese people itself directly supports and contributes strongly to the national liberation movements of the people of the countries of the three continents, and is at the same time a brilliant example which strongly inspires all of progressive mankind."

The Asian, African, and Latin American People's Solidarity Conference's support for the Vietnamese people had the great significance of signifying the actual formation of a front of the people of the three continents against U.S. led imperialism, and was a lively manifestation of the solidarity of the people of the three continents with the Vietnamese people, and a precious source of inspiration for our people.

It was also a victory of our Party's correct international line, which won the sympathy and support of the peace-loving, justice-loving people of the world for our people's just struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.



March to May 1966: The people of the cities of Da Nang and Hue oppose Thieu and Ky (the dissident movement).

In March 1966, on the occasion of the political crisis caused by the contradiction between the lackeys in Military Region I and the central puppet administration (Thieu-Ky had dismissed the I Corps commander, Nguyen Chanh Thi), a strong struggle of the people in the cities began in Da Nang and Hue and rapidly spread to many other cities in the South, such as Quang Tri, Hoi An, Quang Ngai, Quy Nhon, and Saigon. It lasted 76 days and included such animated forms as rallies, demonstrations, workers' strikes, merchants' strikes, and students' strikes.

Thieu and Ky sought all ways to threaten, soothe, and deceive, but none of those things worked, so ultimately they had to send six battalions of the "Crazy Buffalo" Marine force bullies to Da Nang and Hue to suppress the people.

The deep-rooted reason for the movement was the continuous victories of our soldiers and people, beginning from the time when the U.S. troops first set foot in Vietnam, which inspired the patriotism of the urban people. The U.S. troops flooding into the South upset the living standards of the various strata of people, especially in the cities. Racial discrimination, the social evils, and poisoning by decadent culture caused the contradictions between the patriotic people on the one hand and the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys on the other hand to become deeper, and the contradictions among the lackeys to become more fierce.

The formation and development of the movement exacerbated the contradiction within the rulers of the puppet army and administration, and became a struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors and the traitorous lackeys, as well as a source of strength with which the people could openly attack the aggressive colonial policy of the U.S. and the traitorous activities of the Thieu-Ky clique.

Militarily, McNamara, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, had to admit that the struggle movement of the people in the southern cities during that period weakened their war efforts by from 50 to 70 percent.

Although the U.S. imperialists and the Thieu-Ky clique were able to extinguish the movement, that event gave rise to the capability to form a worker-peasant-soldier united front and a worker-peasant-intellectual united front to oppose the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, and created a form of mass uprising in the cities against their neocolonial policy.

Referring to that matter, in a letter to the comrades in Saigon-Gia Dinh dated 1 July 1967 comrade Le Duan observed that "The uprising of the people of Da Nang against the Thieu-Ky clique from March to May 1966, although not ending in victory, taught us a useful lesson about taking advantage of the enemy's internal contradictions. We did not take the initiative in inciting the masses to arise, because we knew how to take advantage of the opposition and conflicts within the ranks of the enemy, exacerbate their contradictions in order to rally the mass forces, and take over the right to lead and mobilize mass struggle, although the Party's forces were few in numbers and its bases in the city were still weak. But



because we were not yet able to fully concentrate our leadership forces, we lost an opportunity to win an even greater victory."

End of 1965 to April 1966: The 1965-1966 Winter-Spring victory breaks up the first U.S. strategic counterattack.

At the end of 1965, by which time they had increased the number of troops on the southern battlefield to 720,000 (including 180,000 Americans and 20,000 South Koreans), with 13 infantry divisions, 5 infantry regiments, and 30 infantry battalions (including 4 U.S. divisions and a U.S. regiment, and 10 South Korean battalions), and more than 2,000 aircraft (including 600 combat aircraft), the U.S. imperialists began to carry out their first strategic counterattack. Its objective was to defeat our main-force units, which would, they boasted, "break the backbone of the Viet Cong," and to bolster the lackey puppet administration. The U.S. and its puppets made feverish preparations beginning at the end of 1965, but the campaign did not actually begin until January 1966. They focused on two principal strategic areas: the lowlands of Military Region 5 and eastern Nam Bo. By the end of April 1966 they had to end the counteroffensive because of large losses.

The U.S. and its puppets launched 450 large and small operations, and there were large-scale battles in which they used between 3 and 21 battalions against our main-force units.

The enemy wanted to concentrate its counteroffensive forces in order to win the initiative and annihilate our main-force units, but we caused them to put up a passive resistance, to disperse, and to resume the defensive against our attacks. By means of many different operational forms we continually attacked the enemy. We won major victories in some of the battles, such as the two battles against sweeping operations in Cu Chi (Gia Dinh), from 9 to 19 January and from 23 January to 5 February 1966, during which we annihilated 2,637 of the enemy (including 2,371 Americans) and shot down or destroyed nearly 100 airplanes; the battle of Phu Yen from 19 January to 10 February 1966; the anti-sweeping operation in northern Binh Dinh between 28 January and 7 March 1966, in which we annihilated 9,116 of the enemy (including 5,160 Americans and 1,255 South Korean soldiers) and shot down 374 airplanes; the surprise-attack at Nha Do-Bong Trang in Thu Dau Mot on 24 February 1966, in which during a few hours of fighting we wiped out two U.S. infantry battalions and two armored personnel carrier battalions totalling 2,500 Americans and destroyed more than 40 tanks and M113's; and the Dong Glap battle in Quang Nam on 4 and 5 March 1966, during which the fighting lasted 40 straight hours and we wiped out 2 U.S. Marine battalions and 4 Marine companies, and shot down 25 airplanes. Those were resounding feats of arms of our people's armed forces, combined with the direct political struggle of the masses.

In addition to defeating the enemy's operations, our people's armed forces shelled and raided airfields (Chu Lai, Tan Son Nhat, and Phu Loi), U.S.-puppet bases (the riad on the Victoria Hotel on 1 April 1966 killed 200 U.S. officers), etc., and inflicted heavy losses on their aircraft, POL and supply depots, and high-class manpower.

The results were that during the 1965-1966 dry season, throughout the South our soldiers and people knocked out of action 104,000 of the enemy (including 42,500 Americans and 3,500 South Koreans), including 34 infantry battalions (14 U.S. battalions and 20 puppet battalions), 4 mechanized battalions (3 U.S. battalions and a puppet battalion), and 178 miscellaneous infantry companies (including 22 U.S. companies).

We shot down or destroyed 1,430 airplanes, and destroyed 600 tanks and armored vehicles, 1,310 trucks, 80 artillery pieces, and 27 ships.

Comrade Truong Son wrote about the significance of the 1965-1966 dry season victory: "The very great significance of that great victory was that we defeated the U.S. limited war from the very beginning. The soldiers and people of the South not only continued to defeat and rout the puppet troops but also defeated the U.S. expeditionary army, one of the most powerful and modern of the capitalist world. We won both a political victory and a military victory, but essentially our victory was a military one. The very important significance of the dry season victory was that it once again demonstrated that our political line defeated, and will completely defeat, the neocolonial aggression policy of the U.S., and that our military line, strategy, and tactics defeated, and will completely defeat, the U.S. limited war strategy and tactics. Our people's war, with its many superior features, proved to be peerless; our heroic people and heroic army are capable, completely capable, of defeating the enemy's limited war and of winning victory, although we must overcome many difficulties and hardships because they must fight more fiercely."\*

April to June 1966: Formation of the Tri-Thien Military Region and the setting up of the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri front.

After the victory of the 1965-1966 dry season, the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee observed that although the movement in Tri-Thien had been able to win a number of victories, but they were only initial victories and in comparison to the developmental momentum of the over-all southern battlefield it had developed slowly although the enemy were weaker than on the other battlefields and our armed forces and corps of cadres were relatively strong.

The Political Bureau realized that in order to advance the revolutionary movement in Tri-Thien strongly and stably, the most fundamental matter was that we continue to step-up our attacks against the enemy and properly apply the slogans of the revolutionary struggle in the South, determine the forms of military attacks against the enemy, and create rich new forms of political struggle that were appropriate to the specific circumstances of Tri Thien.

With regard to organization, in April 1966 the Political Bureau decided to form the Tri-Thien Zone and Military Region. The Tri Thien Zone Party Committee was placed under the direct leadership of the Party Central Committee and the Tri-Thien Military Region Party Committee was placed under the direct leadership of

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\* The Journal QUAN DOI NHAN DAN, May 1966.

the Zone Party Committee, but at the same time was responsible for reporting to, and requesting instructions from the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee with regard to all tasks.

The formation of the Tri-Thien Zone had an important strategic significance and was intended to "annihilate or disintegrate most of the puppet troops, annihilate part of the U.S. troops ... and prepare political forces and armed forces in the cities to serve the general offensive, general uprising plan when conditions are ripe," "... cut the enemy's strategic lines of communication, build our own corridor road, win a great victory in all regards, create a new situation on the Tri-Thien battlefield, and coordinate well with the other battlefields under all circumstances (even the circumstance of the U.S. imperialists expanding the land war to central and southern Laos)." (Resolution of the Standing Committee of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee regarding the missions of the Tri-Thien battlefield, April 1966).

In June 1966 the Military Commission decided to set up the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri Front. At first, a number of main-force units of Military Region 4 were brought in to create a new offensive strategic area in a place where the enemy were weak. That front forced the enemy to disperse their forces into the jungle to come to grips with strong main-force units of the North, thus creating conditions for the other battlefields -- especially the Tri-Thien lowlands -- to be active, and stopping the enemy's plot to expand the land war to the North, especially Military Region 4.

Our taking the offensive on the Tri-Thien battlefield took the U.S. imperialists completely by surprise. They had to undo their entire strategic deployment. Two U.S. Marine divisions brought in to "pacify" the Mekong Delta had to be sent to the jungle-and-mountains area. Thus they wanted to concentrate forces to attack us in Nam Bo but had to disperse them to assume the defensive in order to cope with northern main-force units. The guerrilla warfare movement in Tri-Thien also advanced strongly, which caused the enemy, who were already passive, to become even more confused and passive.

Between June and September 1966, our armed forces on that front knocked out of action 8,700 of the enemy (including 3,000 Americans), liberated 400 villages and 400,000 people, and defeated many enemy sweeping operations, the largest of which were Operation Hatten in Cam Lo, with 10,000 U.S. and puppet troops (15 to 26 July 1966), and Operation Prairie, in western Do Linh, conducted by seven U.S. Marine battalions (15 to 20 September 1966). We killed nearly 3,000 of the enemy in those two operations.

The opening of the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri Front was a very correct policy -- a strategic victory -- of the Party. It was a new contribution of the North to the enhancement of our offensive posture which upset the enemy's strategic posture on the southern battlefield and served to stop the plot of the U.S. imperialists to expand the land war to the North. It clearly expressed the iron will of our soldiers and people, who were determined to fight until they won final victory.



July 1966: President Ho Chi Minh signs a limited mobilization decree and issues an appeal for the entire population to resist the U.S. for national salvation.

In view of the fact that the U.S. imperialists were recklessly and obstinately expanding their war of aggression in the South and carrying out new, extremely serious escalation steps by expanding their war of destruction in the North by attacking Hanoi and the port city of Hai Phong, in view of the life-or-death situation of the homeland, and in order to manifest determination to defeat the U.S. aggressors, at the beginning of July 1966 our country's Supreme Defense Council met under the chairmanship of President Ho Chi Minh. Then, on the basis of the resolution of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, President Ho Chi Minh made public a limited mobilization law to "mobilize some of the reserve officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted men and some of the citizens in a reserve status who have not yet served on active duty," in order to strengthen our national defense forces and promote the just nation-salvation political struggle of our people.

On 17 July 1966 President Ho Chi Minh appealed for the entire population to oppose the U.S. for national salvation and to be determined to defeat the U.S. aggressors. He pointed out that "Johnson and his clique must understand that even if they send 500,000, 1 million, or even more troops in order to step up their war of aggression in South Vietnam, and even if they use thousands of airplanes and intensify their attacks against the North, they cannot weaken the heroic Vietnamese people's iron will and determination to oppose the U.S. for national salvation. The more truculent they are the greater their crimes will be. The war may last 5, 10, 20 years or even longer. Hanoi, Hai Phong, and a number of enterprises may be devastated. But the people of Vietnam are not afraid! Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom. After we are victorious the Vietnamese people will rebuild our country so that it is even better and more beautiful .... For the independence of the homeland, and for the sake of our obligation toward the countries which are opposing the U.S. imperialists, our entire army and entire population must unite as one, not fear sacrifice or hardship, and fight resolutely until total victory is won."

The state's limited mobilization law and the appeal of President Ho Chi Minh manifested the iron will of the people of our entire nation, who concentrated all of their strength to defeat the enemy aggressors, liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to national unification, for the independence and freedom of the nation.

"Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom." Those historic words were a magnificent truth which strongly inspired the patriotism, revolutionary spirit, and hatred for the enemy of our soldiers and people in both the South and the North, and impelled everyone to rush forward to attack the U.S. aggressors. The words of President Ho Chi Minh directly inspired our people to defeat the second strategic counteroffensive, the largest counteroffensive of the U.S. imperialists in their war of aggression in the South of our country.

October and November 1966: The Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee decides upon six strategic operational modes in the war against the U.S. imperialist aggressors.



Implementing the spirit of the resolution of the 12th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, in February 1966 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee set forth six strategic operational modes, which were tested on the southern battlefields in the summer and fall of 1966. In October and November 1966 those six modes were officially approved by the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee.

The contents of those strategic operational modes were as follows:

1. Stepping up the operational activities of the concentrated units, launching medium and large campaigns, and advancing to fighting battles of strategic importance in order to take advantage of our military superiority in some areas, annihilate U.S. battalions and brigades, and wipe out puppet regiments. Campaigns could occur in the forms of attack or counterattack.
2. Stepping up guerrilla warfare to a high level, annihilating small parts of the enemy's manpower, wearing down and dispersing the enemy, smashing the sweeping operations, defeating the "pacification" scheme, protecting the lives and property of the people, and threatening the cities and the important enemy bases.
3. Attacking the enemy's rear-services bases, depots, airfields, ports, and headquarters organs.
4. Completely blocking the enemy's important water and land routes, creating a status of interdiction, surrounding the enemy, forcing the enemy to take the defensive in each area, on each battlefield, and in each city, and weaken their ability to send reinforcements.
5. Stepping up military activities in the city, in the forms of small operations combined with political struggle or large operations combined with offensives and uprisings.
6. Carrying out combat operations combined with military revolts, and carrying out military proselyting and puppet proselyting, especially puppet proselyting, on a strategic scale, thus creating conditions for bringing about disintegration, dissidence, and military revolts.

The six strategic operational modes were contents of the offensive strategy and manifested positiveness, initiative, and resolute, continuous attacks to annihilate the enemy troops and maintain and expand our mastery in all places and at all times, by means of appropriate forces and operational forms. Those modes were combined with one another on a strategic scale throughout the South and on each battlefield of the liberation war in order to attain the strategic objectives and advance to the carrying out of a general offensive and general uprising.

1967

23 to 26 January: The Party Central Committee holds its 13th Plenum and issues a Resolution on stepping up the diplomatic struggle.

Because of the continuous defeats of the enemy our Party adopted the policy of launching a diplomatic offensive to accompany the military and political offensives, in order to more strongly condemn the barbarous crimes of the U.S. aggressors, expose their bogus peace initiatives, emphasize our just cause, inevitable victory, and reasonable stands (the four points of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the five points of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam), and win the stronger sympathy and support of the people of the fraternal socialist nations, of the international communists' and workers' movement, of the national liberation movement, and of the peace-loving and justice-loving people of the world, including the American people.

In January 1967 the 13th Plenum of the Party Central Committee met to discuss that matter.

The conference observed that the implementation of the 11th and 12th plenums of the Party Central Committee had resulted in great victories in all regards. On the international front the struggle movement of the world's people against the U.S. war of aggression and in support of our people's just struggle became increasingly widespread and increasingly stronger. Our diplomatic struggle attained initial results.

Our Party's policy was to "On the basis of fully grasping the motto of protracted war, mobilize and concentrate the forces of the entire nation, make all-out efforts, smash the enemy's plots, and win a decisive victory in a relatively short period of time, while also making positive preparations to defeat the enemy in the event that the war is prolonged or expanded throughout the nation."

In order to carry out our strategic decision, on the basis of continuing to build on the victories that had been won we had to step up the military struggle and the political struggle in the South, while also launching a diplomatic offensive, and combining those forms of struggle to win even greater victories.

In our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, the military struggle and the political struggle, the principal factors which determined victory on the battlefield, served as the basis for victory on the diplomatic front. We could only win at the conference table what we had already won on the battlefield. However, the diplomatic struggle could not merely reflect the struggle on the battlefield. In the international situation at that time, and in view of the nature of the war between ourselves and the enemy, the diplomatic struggle played an important, positive, and active role.

Attacking the enemy diplomatically at that time was well-timed because we had been and were defeating the enemy, and our position was a position of strength.

The resolution also defined the motto of our diplomatic struggle as exploiting our strengths and victories, taking the initiative in attacking the enemy, and maintaining our independence while cooperating closely with the fraternal nations. On the basis of resolutely defending our independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, it was necessary to implement our diplomatic strategy flexibly and cleverly.

For the immediate future we had to concentrate on the slogan of demanding that the U.S. unconditionally and permanently end its bombing of, and all other acts of war against, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Only then could we begin to participate in official talks with the U.S.

The Resolution of the 13th Plenum of the Party Central Committee once again demonstrated the skilled, wise, all-round leadership of our Party. It appeared at an opportune time and clearly and accurately defined the significance, objectives, missions, slogans, and strategy of our diplomatic struggle and served as the compass for all diplomatic activities. Our close combination of the military struggle, the political struggle, and the diplomatic struggle exacerbated the contradictions between the U.S. and the other imperialist countries, created division within the ranks of the U.S. rulers, weakened the morale of the U.S., puppet, and vassal troops, won additional international support for our struggle goals, exposed the obstinacy of the U.S. imperialists, and contributed to the convening of the Paris Conference on Vietnam and the ultimate victory of that Conference.

19 March: The sapper combat arm makes the date of President Ho Chi Minh's visit its tradition day.

Fully understanding the Party's military line and carrying on and developing our brave, resourceful fighting methods the sappers, who were formed into independent sapper teams and units during the anti-French resistance war, rapidly came of age and achieved outstanding feats of arms from the very first days of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

When our Party adopted the six strategic operational modes the sappers were officially recognized as a combat arm of the Vietnam People's Army.

On 19 March 1967 President Ho Chi Minh visited the sapper combat arm. He watched a unit practice tactics and combat techniques and gave very basic instructions regarding the combat arm's development and combat. That date, 19 March 1967, is regarded as the sapper combat arm's tradition day.

In the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation the sappers grew rapidly, operated on all battlefields, and became a special, elite combat arm with very brave, creative, resourceful, and unique fighting methods. They used the small to defeat the large and few to defeat many; the more they fought the stronger they became, and the more they fought the more victorious they were. They developed the sapper art to a very high level in the military art of our army and our people.

The sappers participated in killing tyrants and eliminating spies, attacked the enemy's "pacification," defended the local political and armed bases, effectively supported the guerrilla warfare movement and political struggle of the masses, attacked the enemy's headquarters organs military bases, depots, airfields, ports, key roads, etc., annihilated an important part of the enemy's manpower, and participated in the offensive and counteroffensive campaigns of the main-force troops. At times serving as the sharp spearheads of coordinated-combat arms

formations and at times carrying out independent campaigns, they achieved many glorious feats of arms.

The sappers fought tens of thousands of large and small battles, annihilated more than 30,000 of the enemy (including tens of thousands of Americans, vassals, pilots, and technical personnel); wiped out 9 division command posts and 17 brigade or regimental command posts; wiped out 10 enemy battalions and 100 companies; destroyed more than 6,000 aircraft of the various kinds, 1,600 artillery pieces, 30 missile launchers, nearly 9,000 military vehicles (including 1,300 tanks and armored vehicles), 2,7 million tons of bombs and ammunition, and more than 600 million liters of gasoline; sunk or damaged more than 400 ships and combat boats; blew up more than 100 buildings, ranging from three to seven stories, occupied by U.S., puppet, and vassal officers; and destroyed hundreds of bridges.

During the spring of 1978 the sappers, coordinating closely with our soldiers and people in the South, carried out simultaneous surprise attacks on 64 municipalities and large cities in the South; along with the other units and the people took the city of Hue and held it for a long time; took dozens of the most important strategic objectives in Saigon, such as the U.S. Embassy, the Presidential Palace, the puppet General Staff, the radio station, etc.; and contributed to, along with the entire army and the entire population, striking a decisive blow against the "limited war" strategy and upsetting the U.S.-puppet strategic position.

Between 1969 and 1974 the sappers overcame many difficulties; resolutely held their ground on the battlefields, especially in the municipalities and large cities; built infrastructures in the cities and in the outskirts, attacked many enemy regiments and divisions, depots, airfields, subsectors, and district capitals; contributed to, along with the entire army and the entire population, defeating the U.S. imperialists' strategy of "Vietnamizing the war"; and deservingly punished the enemy for violating the Paris Agreements.

During the victorious General Offensive and Uprising of the spring of 1975, all of the main-force sappers, local sappers, rear-area sappers, rangers, and frogmen participated in the fighting from the very first minutes to total victory, participated in the large-scale battles of the regular troops, took many important bridges and staging areas, outstandingly fulfilled the missions assigned them, supported the strong, rapid assaults of the corps which penetrated deeply, annihilated the enemy in the municipalities and large cities, and coordinated with the navy and infantry in liberating a number of islands of the homeland.

In the course of combat and development, the sappers held high the glorious tradition of an elite, special combat arm which was "absolutely heroic, resourceful and bold, and fought effectively and won big victories."

The National Assembly and the Government presented awards to the sapper combat arm on 3 June 1976. Forty-two units and 58 cadres and men in the combat arm were awarded the glorious designation "Hero of the People's Armed Forces."



October 1966 to April 1967: The 1966-1967 winter-spring victory smashes the enemy's second strategic counteroffensive.

After they were heavily defeated during the 1965-1966 dry season and suffered one heavy defeat after another in both parts of our country during the 1966 rainy season, the U.S. imperialists continued to be obstinate and subjective, and still hoped for a military solution on the battlefield. Therefore, during the 1966-1967 dry season, after they increased their troop strength and stepped up their attacks against the North, they launched a new, even larger counteroffensive. The basic strategic objectives of that counteroffensive were similar to those of the first strategic counteroffensive, but it was carried out in different ways. This time, the U.S. was very hopeful of winning important "search and destroy" and "pacification" victories in order to bring about a turning point and win a decisive victory in a short period of time.

During the 1966-1967 winter-spring period the U.S. and the puppets had a very large force totalling 983,000 men (389,000 Americans and 52,000 vassals), with 9 divisions, 9 regiments, and 20 battalions (6 U.S. divisions, 3 U.S. regiments, 2 puppet divisions, and 2 puppet regiments), 3 702 airplanes, 2,676 tanks and armored vehicles, and 1,805 artillery pieces.

During that second counteroffensive the enemy launched 895 large and small operations (31 percent were attacks on our base areas to annihilate our main-force units, 41 percent were sweeping operations in support of "pacification," and 25 percent were siege-relieving and defensive in nature), which were concentrated in eastern Nam Bo. There were three key battles:

In Operation Attleboro, three brigades were used to attack the Duong Minh Chau war zone between the beginning of November 1966 and 24 November 1966.

Operation Cedar Falls, which involved three U.S. brigades and three puppet brigades (18 battalions), was carried out in the Trang Bang-Ben Suc-Cu Chi "Iron Triangle" area from 8 January to 26 January 1967.

Operation Junction City, the largest operation carried out in any one area during the war, was carried out in the Duong Minh Chau war zone between February 1967 and 16 April 1967 with a force made up of seven U.S. brigades and two puppet brigades (26 battalions), with the objectives of wiping out our headquarters organs, annihilating our main-force units, destroying our stockpiles, encroaching on, dividing, and destroying our base area, and blockading the border.

Having gained momentum from their victories during the previous dry season and rainy season, our soldiers and people in the South, taking the initiative and making outstanding efforts, launched one attack after another against the enemy in all places.

At the beginning of the dry season in the Mekong Delta, on 18 October 1966, we attacked Go Quao in Rach Gia; on 15 January 1967 we smashed Operation Deckhouse 5 carried out by the U.S. and its puppets in Thanh Phu (Ben Tre); in the Central Highlands we launched the Sa Thay 1 operation (18 October to 6 December 1966), after which we attacked the enemy continuously in three provinces but continued to concentrate on the Sa Thay River; in Interzone 5 we launched a spring offensive

in northern Quang Ngai from 28 January to 14 March 1967 and many other activity cycles; and in Tri-Thien, on 9 December 1966 our troops wiped out the An Lo strong-point in Thua Thien, then attacked the enemy at An Cuu, Gio Linh, La Vang, and Tu Ha. On 20 March 1967, for the first time we used heavy artillery in Vinh Linh to shell the U.S. bases at Con Tien and Doc Mieu, killing many Americans and destroying many war facilities.

Meanwhile, in the key area of the U.S. counteroffensive all three of their large operations were broken up, including Operation Junction City, the largest operation carried out by U.S. troops during that counteroffensive. On a battlefield only 400 square kilometers in area they concentrated a force of 40,000 to 50,000 troops, along with many aircraft, artillery pieces, and armored vehicles, in hopes of winning a decisive victory. But they suffered their greatest defeat (nearly 14,000 of the enemy, most of them Americans, were killed, 167 airplanes were shot down or destroyed, and more than 1,000 military vehicles, including more than 800 tanks and armored vehicles, and 90 artillery pieces, were destroyed).

In addition to fighting the enemy on the outer perimeter, the revolutionary armed forces in the South continually attacked the enemy's headquarters organs, such as the attack on the Long Binh depot, the artillery shelling of a U.S.-puppet military parade in the middle of Saigon, the attacks on the enemy bases at Soc Trang, Can Tho, and Vinh Long, and the raids on the Tan Son Nhat, Play Cu, and Da Nang airfields.

The results were that during the 1966-1967 dry season we knocked out of action 151,000 of the enemy (including 68,200 Americans and 5,540 vassals), wiped out 22 infantry battalions (including 9 U.S. battalions and a South Korean battalion), 4 U.S. artillery battalions, 12 mechanized battalions (including 10 U.S. battalions), and 187 miscellaneous companies (including 59 U.S. companies and 7 South Korean companies), destroyed 1,627 tanks and armored vehicles, 2,107 trucks, and 308 artillery pieces, shot down or destroyed 1,213 airplanes, and sank or set afire 42 ships and boats.

The U.S.-puppet "search and destroy" mission failed, so they achieved nothing in their "pacification" mission, although they threw into that effort 90 percent of the puppet troops and many U.S. and vassal troops, tens of thousands of specially trained thugs, millions of dollars, and hundreds of tons of bombs and shells.

The defeat suffered by the U.S. imperialists during that winter-spring period were all-round defeats, both militarily and politically. The defeat was manifested not only in their great losses on the battlefield but, more important, in the complete bankruptcy of the "search and destroy" and "pacification" objectives they had set for that strategic counteroffensive.

Our 1966-1967 winter-spring victory was a victory of great significance in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation. It demonstrated the iron-like revolutionary will of the soldiers and people of the South and the North, who were determined to defeat the U.S. aggressors.

That victory was the result of our Party's correct, scientific political line and military line. It signified the outstanding maturation of our soldiers and

people, and proved that we were certain to win a complete victory over the U.S. aggressors, no matter how many more U.S. expeditionary troops they sent in. The 1966-1967 dry season victory truly created great prospects for our people's anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation.

2 to 13 May and 20 November to 1 December 1967. The International Court of Bertrand Russell conducts a trial of the criminal acts of the U.S. imperialists.

In 1966, while the U.S. imperialists were committing extremely barbarous crimes in Vietnam, at the initiative of the English scholar Bertrand Russell an international court was convened in London on 15 November 1966 to conduct a trial of the U.S. war crimes, in order to stay the bloody hand of the U.S. and support the just struggle of the Vietnamese people.

After sending four court delegations to carry out direct studies in North and South Vietnam and gather witnesses and documents, the Bertrand Russell international court held its first session from 2 to 13 May 1967, with 300 eminent people from many countries in attendance.

The court unanimously concluded that the U.S. government had committed the crime of aggression in Vietnam, and that the governments of Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea were accomplices. The U.S. government had committed war crimes and had systematically bombed civilian targets in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In its second session in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, from 20 November to 1 December 1967, the court concluded that the U.S. wanted to practice genocide in Vietnam not only to intimidate the Vietnamese people but also to threaten the people of the world. The genocidal policy and acts of the U.S. were aimed not only at the Vietnamese people but at mankind as a whole. The U.S. deliberately used the most barbarous weapons, which had been prohibited by international law, to murder children, women, and ordinary people in Vietnam. The U.S. had committed aggression in Laos in the form of a neocolonial war, and had maliciously committed aggression against Kampuchea by continually slandering, provoking, and threatening it.

The Bertrand Russell court did not mete out punishment, for it did not represent any particular country, but its conclusions had the effect of a verdict of political and moral guilt which had profound influence in the world and contributed to awakening the conscience of the world's people, especially the American people, in order to promote the struggle of the American people against the acts of aggression of the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam.

The victory of those two court sessions was proof of the isolation of the U.S. imperialists. That was the first time the war of aggression, and the crimes, committed by the U.S. imperialists, had been comprehensively and systematically condemned by a large group of well-known lawyers, historians, scholars, and journalists from many countries, including the U.S., and had great persuasive force with regard to world opinion, especially opinion in the Western countries.

June 1967: The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam sets up a permanent representative organ in Phnom Penh. The Republic of Cuba appoints an ambassador to the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of the South Vietnam.

On 22 June 1967 the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam set up a permanent representative organ at Phnom Penh.

Soon afterwards, on 30 June 1967, the government of Cuba took the very special action of reaching an agreement with us to set up a diplomatic representative organ of the Republic of Cuba, in which comrade Raul Vandel Vivo served as ambassador extraordinary, to work side-by-side with the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

By the end of 1967, 41 governments, 12 international organizations, and 5 regional organizations had expressed support for the Front's political program. The Front had a representative delegation in Hanoi and permanent organs in the following countries: the Soviet Union, Cuba, Hungary, the Korean People's Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, China, Kampuchea, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Algeria, and Indonesia.

Those diplomatic victories proved that our people's just struggle had the sympathy and support of the great mass of the progressive people of the world. The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam was increasingly recognized by our friends all over the world as the only legitimate representative of our people in the South. The U.S. and its puppets became increasingly isolated.

1 September: Special Congress of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam approves the Front's political program.

After the victory of more than 7 years of activity in accordance with the 10-point program announced on 20 December 1960, and facing the prospect of increasingly greater victories, in accordance with the stand of the Party the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam held a special congress to approve the Front's political program, in order to further expand the national solidarity bloc and mobilize 14 million of our compatriots in the South to advance on the crest of victory and be determined to defeat the U.S. aggressors. Another aim was to make known to the world's people the all of the Front's lines and policies.

The principal contents of the program consisted of four parts:

1. The entire population uniting in opposition to the U.S. for national salvation.
2. The building of an independent, democratic, peaceful, neutral, and prosperous South Vietnam.
3. The reestablishment of normal relations between the South and the North, and the eventual unification of Vietnam.
4. The implementation of a peaceful neutral diplomatic policy.



The congress also set forth 14 major policies which fully and absolutely manifested the historic missions of the democratic national revolution.

When introducing the basic features of the program, the Presidium of the congress stressed that the only correct path of the people of the South at that time for achieving independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, and prosperity, and for advancing to the peaceful unification of the homeland was to continue to promote the sacred anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation until there were no more U.S. aggressor troops in our beloved South Vietnam.

December 1967: The Political Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Party Central Committee issues a Resolution shifting the revolution in the South over to a new phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory. (Approved the the Plenum of the Party Central Committee in January 1968 as the Resolution of the 14th Plenum of the Party Central Committee.)

In June 1967 the Party Central Committee met to evaluate our people's great victory in inflicting a very basic defeat on the U.S. imperialists' limited war. The enemy were confused both politically and militarily and the U.S. was encountering difficulties with regard to its capability to send additional troops, so few additional troops were being sent. For our part, we had made much progress with regard to both position and strength. Therefore, taking advantage of the U.S. imperialists' predicament of encountering difficulty in both advancing and retreating, and of the approaching U.S. Presidential election, it was necessary to prepare to strike a decisive blow against the enemy, win a great victory, bring about a great-leap-forward transformation, and force the U.S. to accept military defeat.

In that spirit, in December 1967 the Political Bureau met and issued the historic resolution on "transforming our revolutionary war in the South to a new phase -- the phase of winning a decisive victory."

With regard to the present situation and missions, the Political Bureau made the following analysis: "We are standing before great strategic prospects and opportunities; the U.S. imperialists are in a strategic position of finding it difficult to either advance or retreat. Clearly, in comparison to its definite political and military goals in the South, the war efforts of the U.S. (as well as their losses) in Vietnam are at their ecme."

After reviewing the basic plots and continuous defeats of the enemy, the Political Bureau observed that "Due to the strategic defeats of the U.S. in the South and our great victories during this year's winter-spring season, it will be difficult for the enemy to carry out a thirs counteroffensive. The tendency of the situation throughout 1968 will be that they that will increasingly take the defensive and become more passive than in the past."

For our part, the Political Bureau observed that we had defeated the enemy both strategically and tactically, our military and political forces in the South were larger and stronger than ever, and we had taken the initiative on all battlefields. But we also had a number of weaknesses with regard to large-scale annihilating battles, our urban work, ensuring supplies and equipment, the military proselyting work, etc.

The Political Bureau concluded that "The basic course of the situation is that we are in a position of victory, initiative, and advantage, while the enemy are in a situation of defeat, passivity, and difficulty. The situation also allowed us to change our revolutionary war over to a new phase -- the phase of decisive victory."

On the basis of the above-mentioned analysis and observation, the Political Bureau concluded that "Our key, urgent mission is to mobilize the greatest efforts on the part of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both the North and the South to advance our revolutionary war to the highest developmental level by carrying out a General Offensive-General Uprising to win a decisive victory, in order to attain our strategic objectives. "

Because we would carry out the General Offensive-General Uprising under the conditions of the enemy still having more than 1 million troops and great war potential, the offensive by the military forces on the principal battlefields and the uprising by the people in the large cities, the two principal offensive thrusts, would be closely coordinated with each other and support each other, and would advance the General Offensive and General Uprising in all three areas: the cities, the rural lowlands, and the mountains.

The Political Bureau foresaw three possible courses of development of the situation: first, we would win great victories on the important battlefields, the offensives and uprisings would be successful in the large cities, and the enemy's aggressive will would be smashed and they would have to negotiate to conclude the war in accordance with our objectives and requirements; second, although we won major victories in many places the enemy would still have many forces in the major bases to continue the fighting with us; third, the U.S. would increase its forces and expand the war. We would have to make extraordinary efforts to win the greatest possible victory in the case of the first possibility, but we would also be prepared to cope with the second possibility. There was little likelihood of the third possibility, but we would have to actively guard against it.

The Political Bureau appealed for the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both parts of the country to transform the Party's strategic decision to win a decisive victory on the battlefield into revolutionary acts. The North would have to strengthen its will to fight and defeat the U.S. aggressors and devote all of its strength to serving the great front line, defend and strengthen the great rear area, and be determined to win a decisive victory on the main battlefield.

The December 1967 resolution of the Political Bureau, at a time when the U.S. had escalated the limited war to the level of more than 1 million troops, including 500,000 U.S. expeditionary troops, evaluated the situation very correctly, analyzed the opportunity very scientifically, and set forth very creative offensive measures and forms for winning a strategic victory and advance the revolution in the South to a new phase.

1968

January 1968: Soldiers and people of Laos launch a campaign to liberate Nam Bac in northern Laos.

Nam Bac, a district in Luang Prabang Province that had been liberated by the Pathet Lao, was an important strategic area on the northwestern Laos battlefield. It had therefore become the scene of fierce contention between revolution and counter-revolution in Laos over a period of many years.

In July 1966 the enemy used six main-force battalions, made up of the GM.11 and the BV.12, 15, and 36 units, to occupy the Nam Bac area, with the scheme of transforming that area into a permanent base which connected with and protected Luang Prabang, plunder the on-the-spot manpower and wealth, restore and develop the local bandits, reduce the liberated area in northwestern Laos, and threaten our country's Tay Bac area.

Between July 1966 and July 1967 the Pathet Lao troops, in coordination with the volunteer Vietnamese troops, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and annihilated nearly all of the enemy in the places they had occupied. The enemy in Nam Bac were surrounded and isolated.

In August 1967 the reactionary Laos rulers, obstinately scheming to hold Nam Bac at all costs, sent in GM.12 and GM.15 as reinforcements, in hopes of retaking the lost territory and reversing the situation. But all of the enemy's attacks were defeated.

By December 1967 the enemy forces in Nam Bac included GM.11, GM.12 and GM.15, one battalion of GM.25, and one artillery battalion, garrisoning three strongpoint complexes which were relatively far from one another and were cut off from one another.

The Laos leadership cadres and we understood that the fact that the enemy had sent relatively large forces to Nam Bac presented us with a very good opportunity to annihilate them. Our Laotian cadres and we adopted the policy of coordinating forces in carrying out a Nam Bac campaign to annihilate the enemy in that area, liberate all of the Nam Bac area in order to smash the enemy's plot, restore and consolidate the northwestern Laos liberated area, defend our country's Tay Bac rear area, change the comparison of forces in a manner advantageous to the revolution, create a political-military situation favorable for the Laotian revolution, and advance to the winning of even greater victories.

On 12 January, after nearly a month of continuous operations to approach and surround the enemy, the Lao-Viet armed forces opened fire and simultaneously attacked the enemy's strongpoints in Nam Bac. By 15 January, most of the enemy troops had been annihilated and the rest fled in panic. The Laotian troops and our troops shifted over to pursuing and mopping up the enemy. On 27 January the campaign ended in complete victory.

The results were that we knocked out of action 3,189 of the enemy (973 killed, 2,122 captured, and 94 wounded), including 84 officers and 375 noncommissioned officers; 6 battalions were wiped out and 5 battalions suffered heavy losses. Our friends captured 1,349 weapons of the various kinds, destroyed 9 105mm howitzers, 2 75mm pack howitzers, 2 trucks, and 12 airplanes, shot down 1 T.28 and 1 helicopter, liberated the Nam Bac area and its population of more than 10,000, eliminated the nests of local bandits, and regained the entire area lost to the enemy since mid-1966.

The Nam Bac victory had a very great, all-round significance militarily and politically, with regard to the Laotian people as well as ourselves. Within a short period of time the enemy lost one-third of their strategic mobile forces, including many groups along with nearly all of their officers and noncommissioned officers, which caused the comparison of forces to change rapidly in the favor of the Laotian revolution. The campaign liberated a strategically important area, signified the rapid maturation of the armed forces of our friends and ourselves (especially the main-force troops) strongly inspired and further tightened the spirit of militant solidarity between the soldiers and people of Vietnam and Laos, and coordinated harmoniously with the general offensive and uprisings that would occur on the southern battlefield only a few days later.

30 January to 31 March: The general offensive and simultaneous uprising of Tet Mau Than.

Implementing the December 1967 Resolution of the Political Bureau, our people's armed forces began the offensive by our main-force troops in the area of Route 9-Khe Sanh. And on the occasion of Tet Mau Than, at a time when the enemy were careless, our soldiers and people throughout the South organized large-scale strategic raids throughout the South, attacking the municipalities and cities in coordination with the simultaneous uprisings of the rural and urban masses to win the greatest victory ever.

After their heavy defeat in their second counteroffensive, the U.S. increased its troop strength to 525,000 and decided to launch a third counteroffensive in eastern Nam Bo during the 1967-1968 winter-spring season. On 8 December 1967 the U.S. 25th Division launched Operation Goldbrick against Ca Tum in War Zone C, thus beginning the third counteroffensive. But having discovered that our forces were moving in large numbers to important areas on the southern battlefield, they were forced to cancel their counteroffensive plan and withdraw all of their forces to hold the area around Saigon and north and south of Route 1.

In order to draw in and pin down most of the enemy forces in northern Quang Tri we attacked Khe Sanh and nearly all of the enemy positions on Route 9 during the night of 20 January and the early morning of 21 January.

The U.S. and their puppets knew that we would launch a major offensive but could not predict where it would take place, its scale, or the form it would take, nor did they know what forces we had. Thus they could only sound the alarm all over the South and cancel the Tet ceasefire, but made no specific advance preparations.

During the night of 30 January and the early morning of 31 January 1968 the armed forces and people in the South launched a general offensive and simultaneous uprising on all southern battlefields, especially in the large cities and on the principal battlefield, on a very large scale:

-- The offensive and simultaneous uprising in practically all municipalities and large cities resulted in our mastery of many of them for many days or many hours. We won complete control of Hue, organized a revolutionary administration, held the city 25 days, and fought off hundreds of enemy counterattacks.



--We attacked a very large number of enemy command organs, such as the U.S. Embassy, "Independence Palace," the puppet General Staff, the command headquarters of the corps, armed forces branches, divisions, brigades, and regiments of the U.S., the puppets, and the vassals, and the military sectors and subsectors.

--We attacked a large number of enemy military bases and defensive lines, including 45 airfields, among them such large airfields as Tan Son Nhat, Bien Hoa, Da Nang, and Chu Lai; a large number of supply depots, including many large, central depots such as those at Long Binh, Nha Be, Lien Chieu, Da Nang, Chu Lai, Phu Bai, Hue, Play Cu, Buon Ma Thuot, Quy Nhon, Soc Trang, etc.; and a large number of ports and enemy naval bases.

--We attacked nearly all of the water and land routes and paralyzed all of the enemy's communications and transportation activities.

In many rural areas, with or without the support of armed forces the masses strongly arose, smashed the puppets' administrative apparatus and central apparatus, destroyed a large number of "strategic hamlets," smashed or forced the abandonment of many outposts, liberated land and won the right of mastership, established revolutionary administrations, and expanded and consolidated our rear area.

The results were that within only a two-month period in the spring of 1968 (especially from the night of 30 January to the end of February 1968) we annihilated or disintegrated large parts of the puppet army. Some 147,000 of the enemy were killed (including 43,000 Americans), 200,000 puppet soldiers deserted, and 31 battalions, 1 armored regiment, 5 armored squadrons, and 195 companies were heavily damaged, and the combat effectiveness of the puppet army seriously declined. Heavy losses were also inflicted on the U.S. troops: 5 battalions and 69 companies were wiped out or suffered heavy casualties.

A very large amount of war facilities and supplies were destroyed, many supply depots and airfields were attacked: more than 200 gasoline storage depots and 250 ammunition dumps were attacked, there were 160 attacks on 66 airfields and 166 attacks on 77 supply dumps, 2,370 airplanes were shot down or destroyed, and 1,700 tanks and armored vehicles, thousands of trucks, 350 artillery pieces, 230 ships and boats, and 1,368,000 tons of war materiel -- 74 percent of the enemy's reserves -- were lost or destroyed.

The general offensive and simultaneous uprising at the beginning of spring, 1968, were an inevitable development of the offensive strategy of the southern revolution. They had an extremely important significance, for within only a short period of time we completely changed our battlefield position, brought the war to the final lairs of the enemy, rapidly changed the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy much to our advantage, created a new situation, and created a new strategic situation with new capabilities.

"The general offensive and simultaneous uprising of the spring of Tet Mau Than [1968] were a blow struck against the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists. The glorious victory won by that bold, unexpected general offensive and simultaneous uprising upset the enemy's strategic situation, bankrupted the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists, and forced them to deescalate the war and

negotiate with us at the Paris Conference." (Political Report of the Fourth Party Congress.)

31 March: Johnson has to announce a deescalation of the war and admit the defeat of the limited war.

After nearly 3 years of sending a very large number of the U.S. expeditionary troops to our country, carrying out strategic counteroffensives in South Vietnam, and intensifying and expanding their war of destruction in the North, the U.S. was defeated in both parts of our country as well as on the Kampuchean and Laotian battlefields. Our Tet Mau Than general offensive and uprising throughout the South were another unexpected, strong blow which "shook the U.S." It was also a major defeat for their war of aggression as a whole.

Although the most belligerent members of the U.S. ruling apparatus, especially the generals of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and CINCPAC, sought all ways to create pressure to intensify the war, such as recommending that 200,000 additional troops be sent to South Vietnam, that air attacks be stepped up, that both naval and land forces be used to attack the North, that U.S. reserve troops be mobilized on a large scale, etc., but U.S. public opinion and even some within the Johnson administration were fed up and strongly protested the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Many U.S. Congressmen protested and demanded that U.S. policy toward the war in Vietnam be reviewed. Clifford, the new U.S. Secretary of Defense, was assigned the task of, along with others, coming up with a new strategy. On 29 February 1968 he concluded that "even if we send 200,000 additional troops we cannot expel the enemy from South Vietnam or annihilate their forces," and that "if we further escalate the war there will explode in our country the greatest crisis ever."

On 25 March 1968 a conference of unofficial high-level advisers made up of "experts" from former administrations and from the Johnson administration, most of them "hawks," also recommended that Johnson deescalate the war.

On 27 March 1968 Eisenhower, a former U.S. President, also had to admit that "...never have I experienced such a lamentable situation as the present circumstances of the United States, which is deeply divided over the war."

Confronted with that situation, Johnson and the rulers in the White House were deeply shaken. On 22 March 1968 Johnson dismissed Westmoreland and recalled him to the U.S., and agreed to send only a symbolic number of troops to Vietnam, not the 200,000 Johnson himself had approved on 13 March 1968.

On 31 March 1968 Johnson announced his decision to restrict U.S. activities in Vietnam by ordering an end to the bombing of the North above the 20th Parallel, and also declared that he would not run for a second term as President and that he would send a representative to talk with a representative of our Government in Paris.

Previously, on 30 March 1968, Westmoreland returned to Saigon from the U.S. to explain the policy of the U.S. government;

--The "search and destroy" strategy would be replaced by a "clear and hold" strategy.

--The South Vietnamese (puppet) Army would gradually replace the U.S. troops on the battlefield and play the principal role. The military efforts would be replaced by military, economic, political, and social efforts. The new strategy would emphasize anti-guerrilla activities and the number of large-scale operations would decline.

With Johnson's announcement of 31 March 1968 the U.S. imperialists officially admitted the defeat of the "limited war" strategy and admitted that they had to deescalate the war and had been forced to negotiate with us and change their strategy.

Our people defeated the "limited war" strategy of the U.S. imperialists. That was a major defeat for their war of aggression in our country and also was a step toward the bankruptcy of their global strategy.

We won a victory in the phase of the most serious challenge to our national destiny. But the U.S. imperialists were very obstinate; they still had potential and had come up with new plots and schemes. Our soldiers and people had to continue to fight to defend the North, liberate the South, and advance to unifying the homeland.

24 April: The Political Bureau holds a conference to assess the Tet Mau Than activity cycle and issues a resolution on the new direction of struggle in order to win a decisive victory.

After 2 months of the general offensive and simultaneous uprising, the Political Bureau met to assess the activity cycle and set forth the direction for the coming period.

In evaluating the activity cycle, the Political Bureau noted that in the first phase of implementing the Party Central Committee's policy of carrying out a general offensive and simultaneous uprising we had won a great, all-round victory and brought about a new turning point in order to advance to the winning of a decisive victory in the war to liberate the South.

Predicting the enemy's future plots and policies, the Political Bureau concluded that their immediate objective was to concentrate their forces on holding the cities and bases, the most important of which were Saigon, Hue, and Military Region I. They would go all-out to increase the number of U.S. expeditionary troops, restore the puppet army and administration, and step up their attacks on the North and their fraudulent diplomatic activities. But they were encountering difficulties in many respects.

On the basis of the characteristics of our situation and the enemy's situation the Political Bureau, in order to exploit our victory and push the enemy into an even more desperate situation, defined our direction of struggle as follows: "Mobilizing the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population to manifest a spirit of victory, continue to develop the all-round offensive, win increasingly

greater victories, rapidly expand the armed forces and political forces of the revolution, become stronger as we fight, and push the enemy into an irreversible status of continuous defeat and increasing weakness and disintegration, in order to advance to the winning of a decisive victory."

The resolution set forth the following specific requirements:

- Continually attacking the cities, tightening our encirclements, creating a situation of permanent crisis in the cities, and inciting the masses to arise strongly to win and maintain mastery.

- Liberating most of the rural area and advancing to the taking of the entire rural area.

- Continuing to carry out an all-round offensive against the puppet army and puppet administration and causing their organization to disintegrate and their morale to collapse beyond salvation.

- Continuing to attack the U.S. troops and annihilating an important part of their manpower.

- Continually attacking the military bases, rear services bases, and key lines of communication.

- Rapidly developing our armed forces and revolutionary political forces with regard to quality and quantity.

- Comprehensively consolidating the liberated area politically, militarily, economically, and socially.

- The North would build and consolidate national defense, promote production, resolutely defeat all of the enemy's escalations, and ensure communications and transportation.

21 April: Formation of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces.

After more than 10 years of the U.S. imperialists committing aggression against our country, in the cities temporarily occupied by the U.S. and its puppets the economic, political, cultural, and moral lives of the people were suffocating. The cities were turned into military camps and houses of prostitution, with a changing society that was full of corrupt customs.

Because of that situation, the people of the cities continuously arose to struggle against the U.S. bandits and the traitorous lackeys. Leading the way was the persistent, resolute struggle of the working class and the laboring people, which served to win over the other strata of people. Among those strata, including puppet officials and officers, there were people who had made progress with regard to their spirit and attitude, and in one way or another they had acted against the U.S. and Thieu-Ky.



Our Party felt that it was necessary to have an organizational form to expand the national united front to oppose the U.S. for national salvation that would be capable of rallying people of many different tendencies and persuasions in the southern cities who were patriotic and were opposed to the U.S. and Thieu-Ky but who, for one reason or another did not yet want to participate in the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam.

That correct policy met with response. More and more prominent people, doctors, professors, writers, journalists, clergymen, college students, national bourgeoisie, and officials and officers of the puppet army and administration participated in the struggle against the U.S. and Thieu-Ky. On 20 and 21 April 1968 representatives of those strata held a conference to set up the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces and elect the Alliance Central Committee under the chairmanship of lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao.

In its national-salvation declaration the Alliance clearly stated its objectives of "uniting all patriotic forces and individuals, resolutely opposing foreign aggression, overthrowing the puppet regime of Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky, and setting up a national coalition government and winning independence, democracy, and peace."

The appearance of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces was a new developmental step of the popular solidarity bloc. That was a prompt, positive response following the Tet Mau Than victory in support of our people's struggle on the military, political, and diplomatic fronts, especially on the diplomatic front, which caused the U.S. and Thieu-Ky to become more isolated and contributed to the glorious victory of the enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation.

13 May: First meeting of the Two-Party Conference in Paris.

In Johnson's 31 March 1968 speech the U.S. imperialists, although admitting that they had to deescalate the war, in fact continued to obstinately advocate their "limited bombing" of the North of our country.

The people of Vietnam and of the world vehemently protested those acts of the U.S. imperialists. On 3 April 1968 our Government issued a declaration severely condemning the insidious plots and schemes of the U.S. and reiterated the just stand and good-will attitude of our Government and people. The declaration stated, "Clearly, the U.S. government has not yet strictly and fully met the legitimate demands of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, of progressive U.S. opinion, and of world opinion. However, for its part the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares its readiness to send representatives to meet with U.S. representatives to arrange with the U.S. side the unconditional cessation of the bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam so that the talks may begin."

On 3 May our Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a declaration regarding such matters as the rank of representatives and the location and time of the official talks between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the U.S. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, comrade Xuan Thuy, was selected by the Government to represent the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Paris was to be the location of the talks, and the official talks were to begin on 10 May or a few days later.

On 13 May the official talks between the representative of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the representative of the U.S. government began. The U.S. delegation was headed by Harriman. Minister of Foreign Affairs Xuan Thuy, the first to speak, stressed that the objective of the talks were "to arrange with the U.S. side the unconditional cessation of the bombing, and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and then to talk about other matters relevant to the two sides."

The two-party talks at Paris resolved no basic problems in 1968, but they began a period in which we directly attacked the enemy diplomatically at the conference table, which was a very advantageous forum for exposing the aggression, barbarity, and obstinacy of the U.S. imperialists. The struggle at the conference was coordinated with and supported by the military and political struggle on the battlefield. It was the necessary first step toward the Four-Party Conference in Paris, which concluded victoriously with the signing of the agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam.

4 May and 17 August 1968: Beginning of the second and third phases of the General Offensive.

Implementing the April 1968 Resolution of the Political Bureau, the second phase of the General Offensive began on 4 May 1968. Although the enemy had made preparations in advance and had concentrated two-thirds of the U.S. forces and all of the puppet general reserves to defend the large cities, especially around Saigon, we attacked 30 municipalities and cities, 70 towns, district seats, and military subsectors, 27 puppet corps, division, brigade, and regiment headquarters, 40 important airfields and warehouses, etc. The strongest attacks were in Saigon-Gia Dinh. We attacked the Police Headquarters, the City Hall, the U.S. Embassy housing area, the puppet Premier's residence, the radio station, and the TV station, then held our ground and fought off the enemy's counterattacks, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Coordinating with Saigon, we launched simultaneous attacks on the defensive lines around Saigon, such as Duc Hoa, Ben Luc (Long An), Tan Thoi Hiep (Gia Dinh), and Bien Hoa, and the municipalities and cities in the Mekong Delta, such as Can Tho, My Tho, Ben Tre, Chau Doc, Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, Sa Dec, and Ca May, combined with the repulsing of the enemy's counterattacks in Long An, Tay Ninh, Thu Dau Mot, and Bien Hoa (8 to 21 May).

In Zone 5 and the Central Highlands, in coordination with attacks on the cities of Da Nang, Hoi An, Quang Ngai, Da Lat, and Phan Thiet (4 to 5 May) we defeated the enemy's relief operation along the Thu Bon River in Quang Nam from 5 to 24 May.

On the Tri-Thien and Route 9 battlefields, after withdrawing from Hue we both continued to encircle the city and the U.S. complex at Khe Sanh and stopped the U.S.-puppet operation, of which the 1st Air Cavalry Division served us the hard core, in the lowland and jungle-and-mountains areas. The largest operations were "Pegasus" and "Scotland" in the Route 9 area, and "Carentan" and "Delaware" in the A Sau Valley.

Taking advantage the enemy's internal neglect, we carried out raids, ambushes, and heavy artillery shelling, the most outstanding of which were an ambush which

knocked out 10 warships on the Huong River (6 May and the artillery shelling of the Dong Lam base in Thua Thien, which destroyed 150 airplanes of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, destroyed 100 vehicles, most of them tanks and armored vehicles, and killed 1,600 of the enemy (19 May).

The second phase inflicted many losses on the enemy but did not meet the political and military requirements we had set.

In August 1968 the Political Bureau met and decided to continue to "promote the general offensive and general uprising to win a decisive victory" and cause the enemy to be defeated on the battlefield, defeated in the large cities, and defeat defeated in the U.S. itself." At the same time, we had to be "prepared to defeat the U.S. should they prolong or expand the war."

Carrying out that policy, we urgently carried out the third phase of the general offensive between 17 August and 30 September. The general offensive broke out on all battlefields. We simultaneously attacked 27 cities, more than 100 towns, district capitals, and military subsectors, 17 airfields, 3 depots, and 6 enemy division headquarters. In Saigon we attacked the National Assembly building and the puppet General Staff, while our forces on the outer perimeter attacked a whole series of enemy bases, such as the Tay Ninh Holy See, the base camp of the 3rd Brigade of the puppet 25th Division at Trang Lon, Ca Tum, the U.S. communications station on Mt. Ba Den, the U.S. bases at Tha La and Ben Cui, and the position of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division at Loc Ninh. In Nam Bo we annihilated 14,000 of the enemy, including 10,000 Americans. The U.S. Lieutenant General Casey, commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, was killed during that phase.

In Zone 5 we attacked Da Nang, took the Special Zone and the radio station, attacked the airfield, Mt. Non Nuoc, the Son Tra Peninsula, etc., annihilated or knocked out of action 23,000 of the enemy, and inflicted heavy casualties on two puppet mobile regiments and part of the U.S. Americal Division.

On the Tri-Thien front, after the U.S. troops were forced to withdraw from Khe Sanh (9 July), we continued to press the attack on Route 9 and stopped the enemy's operations out to the jungles-and-mountains area.

During the second and third phases of the general offensive in 1968 we annihilated much of the enemy's manpower and war facilities, and won a very great victory. But we still did not meet the basic requirements that had been set forth. Furthermore, because the enemy's situation and our situation had changed we had to fight continually and to concentrate on the cities. In the rural areas we were vulnerable and were strongly counterattacked by the enemy, so our forces were depleted and in some places the liberated area was reduced. The revolutionary movement in the Nam Bo lowlands encountered many difficulties and our offensive posture weakened. When the enemy launched a fierce counteroffensive our weaknesses and deficiencies caused the situation to undergo complicated changes after Tet Mau Than [1968].

26 June to 9 July: The U.S. withdraws from Khe Sanh.

The Khe Sanh strongpoint was set up by the U.S.-puppets in mid-1966, when we opened the Route 9-Northern Quang Tri front.

Because of our strong pressure the enemy forces had to be increased, and by the end of 1967 the enemy had created there a complex of key strongpoints made up of three clusters of strongpoints -- Ta Con, Huong Hoa, and Lang Vay -- which lay within the Route 9 defensive line of the U.S. bandits to the west, along the Vietnam-Laos border. The U.S. troops permanently stationed there totalled nearly 10,000, made up of 4 Marine battalions, artillery forces, armor, and support units, as well as tens of thousands of others who were ready to reinforce. They had strong artillery and air support, including B52 strategic bombers.

We launched four consecutive attacks on Khe Sanh in a period of a little more than 5 months:

- Between 21 January and 7 February 1968 we annihilated the Huong Hoa military subsector and the Lang Vay strongpoint.
- Between 8 February and 31 March we surrounded the Ta Con strongpoint cluster.
- In April we defeated the U.S. siege-relieving operation bearing the name "Pegasus."
- From 5 to 9 July we maintained our encirclement and attacked the withdrawing enemy troops.

After the measures the enemy took to break the siege of Khe Sanh were smashed our encirclement became increasingly tighter and the U.S. intention of "defending Khe Sanh at all costs" had to be replaced by "we don't intend to set up a Dien Bien Phu." They plotted to surreptitiously flee from Khe Sanh.

On 26 June the U.S. commanders falsely claimed that they had completed the withdrawal from the Khe Sanh base (in fact, they had only just begun). Our troops pursued them, attacked their positions, and intercepted and attacked enemy who were fleeing by land, while also preventing them from withdrawing by air. On 9 July we completely liberated Khe Sanh. During the fighting against the fleeing enemy troops we killed or wounded more than 7,000 Americans, shot down 22 airplanes, destroyed 69 military vehicles, and captured many weapons and military supplies, including 2 helicopters. They were forced to pay a big price for that withdrawal.

The results were that after 170 days of attacking and encircling Khe Sanh and fighting the fleeing enemy troops we wiped out 17,000 of the enemy (including 13,000 Americans), shot down or destroyed 480 airplanes, 120 military vehicles, 65 artillery pieces or heavy mortars, and 55 supply depots. We captured thousands of weapons of the various kinds and hundreds of tons of military supplies and food, and completely liberated Huong Hoa District and its more than 10,000 inhabitants.

The abandonment of Khe Sanh was a major defeat for the enemy. It began the retreat of the U.S. expeditionary army and signified a new step toward the defeat of



the U.S. defensive strategy, for that was the first important U.S. base in South Vietnam that had to be abandoned because of our pressure. A large area from Lao Bao to Ca Lu, extending more than 40 kilometers along the U.S.-puppet Route 9 strategic defense line was thrown open. Our offensive posture became even stronger. It was a victory with a strategic significance.

The defeat of the defensive, siege-relieving, and withdrawal tactics of the U.S. troops involving many kinds of forces and many modern facilities also had a strategic significance.

The withdrawal from Khe Sanh was also a serious political defeat for the U.S. imperialists and caused chaos and contradictions within the U.S. rulers and military commanders and fear and consternation among the U.S. soldiers and the puppet army and administration. Johnson "committed U.S. honor to holding Khe Sanh and forced the Joint Chiefs of Staff to sign a pledge in blood" (quote from Schlesinger), but in the end the U.S. troops were forced to withdraw. That event once again demonstrated to our people and to the people of the world that the U.S. imperialists, although obstinate, had been struck with painful blows and had to admit defeat.

2 November and 3 November: The Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issues a declaration, and President Ho Chi Minh issues an appeal, regarding the unconditional cessation of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam.

Because of the increasingly perilous situation of the U.S. imperialists and the great difficulties their war of aggression was causing them, and because of the pressure of world opinion and U.S. opinion, on 1 November 1968 had to announce the complete cessation of the bombing and shelling of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by the U.S. air force, navy and artillery, in order to reach a political solution to the Vietnam problem.

On 2 November 1968 the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration on that matter. The declaration stated that "The fact that the U.S. has had to unconditionally end its bombings and attacks throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, after 4 years of accumulating unprecedented crimes against the people of North Vietnam and after 5 months of deadlocking the talks in Paris, signifies a great victory for the Vietnamese people in both parts of the country. It is also a great victory for the socialist camp, the national liberation movement, and the peace movement, as well as a great victory for the people of the world, including the progressive U.S. people.

"In order to reach a correct political solution with regard to Vietnam, the U.S. government must abandon all plots of intervention and aggression against Vietnam and must respect the basic national rights of the Vietnamese people. As long as the U.S. continues to commit aggression in Vietnam the Vietnamese people will continue to fight until they win a complete victory."

In his appeal of 3 November 1968, President Ho Chi Minh said, "We have defeated the U.S. imperialists' war of aggression in the North. But that is only an initial victory. The U.S. imperialists are very obstinate and wily. They speak of

'peace' and 'negotiations' but are still unwilling to abandon their aggressive intentions. More than a million U.S., puppet, and vassal troops are continuing to commit countless barbarous crimes against our compatriots in the South.

"Therefore, a sacred mission of our entire population at present is to manifest a spirit of determination to fight and win, and of determination to liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland.

"As long as there are aggressors in our country we must continue to fight and sweep them out."

Also on 3 November the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issued a declaration which stated the stand of the Front regarding a political solution to the matter of South Vietnam.

On 5 November the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army issued a communique and praising the accomplishments of the people's armed forces and stressing the heavy responsibility of the armed forces during the coming period. The communique also referred to the very great and important strategic significance of the defeat by our soldiers and people of the war of destruction of the U.S. imperialists:

-- We had smashed one of their strategic plots, defeated a part of their war of aggression against our country, and struck a heavy blow against their aggressive will.

-- We had defeated a new form of warfare in the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists.

That victory had caused our people to become more confident and determined to fight to final victory, caused our friends all over the world to be enthusiastic and pleased, and terrified the enemy and caused them to encounter an increasingly larger number of difficulties.

#### Chapter IV

From the Beginning of 1969 to 27 January 1973

Mobilizing the Entire Nation to Make the Greatest Possible Efforts, Cooperating With the Fraternal People of Laos and Kampuchea to Defeat the U.S. Imperialists' Strategy of "Vietnamizing the War," Winning a Decisive Victory, and Forcing the U.S. Imperialists to Sign the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and Withdraw all U.S. and Vassal Troops From the South of Our Country

1969

25 January: The Four-Sided Conference on Vietnam convenes in Paris.

In its declaration of 2 November 1968, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam stated that "After the U.S. has unconditionally ended its bombing and shelling in all parts of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Government of the

Democratic Republic of Vietnam will discuss with the U.S. side 'the other matters relevant to the two sides' in order to find a political solution of the Vietnam problem. With the agreement of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam declares its readiness to participate in a conference of representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the U.S., and the Saigon administration. The presence of the representative of the Saigon administration at that conference does not mean that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam recognizes that administration."

The 3 November 1968 declaration of the Central Committee of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam added that "In view of the fact the U.S. has unconditionally ended its bombing and shelling of North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam resolutely supports the stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, stated in its 2 November 1968 declaration, in order to find a political solution to the Vietnam problem. After holding discussions, and reaching agreement, with the Central Committee of the Alliance of Vietnamese National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam agrees to participate in a four-sided conference by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the U.S. and the Saigon administration. At that conference the representative of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam will be the voice of the people in the South and the voice of the just cause."

On 13 November 1968 the U.S. Department of State declared that "The United States approves a conference of two sides: the United States and the Republic of Vietnam on one side and North Vietnam and any other party on the other side."

The delegation of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam was still headed by comrade Xuan Thuy, with comrade Le Duc Tho serving as special adviser. The U.S. delegation was still headed by Harriman.

On 10 December 1968, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam sent a delegation to the Paris Conference on Vietnam headed by comrade Tran Buu Kiem, with Nguyen Thi Binh serving as the deputy head.

The Saigon puppet regime was very worried, confused, and vexed over the developments. On 2 November 1968 Nguyen Van Thieu declared that he would send no representative to the expanded talks in Paris and that the decision to halt the bombing in all parts of the North was a unilateral decision made by the U.S. But on 8 December the U.S. lackeys sent a delegation headed by Nguyen Cao Ky and Pham Dang Lam to participate in the Paris Conference.

The first meeting, on 18 January 1969, was held to discuss preparations for the first full session of the Paris Conference on Vietnam, which was officially convened on 25 January 1969. Comrade Tran Buu Kiem, the first to speak during that session, presented the five-point stand of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Comrade Xuan Thuy then expressed opinions about the Vietnam situation, the correct anti-U.S., national salvation line, and the victories of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, and stressed the iron determination of our people, who were

determined to fight until they won independence and freedom, should the U.S. continue to obstinately pursue its war of aggression.

The U.S. imperialists, who had been forced to accept the participation in the conference of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, had to accept the initial defeat of their "negotiations from a position of strength" policy, and were forced to recognize the strength of the patriotic movement of the people of the South and their representative, the National Liberation Front. That was a victory of the people of the South and of our entire nation, and was a defeat for the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys.

April 1969: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee issues a Resolution on the immediate situation and missions.

After our continuous attacks in 1968 and the first part of 1969, the enemy's defeats led to their having to deescalate the war even more clearly. But we also encountered many difficulties with regard to troop strength, the ensuring of supplies, etc., so the thoughts and consciousness of some Party members and cadres with regard to the situation and missions underwent complicated changes.

In view of that situation, in April 1969 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on "the immediate situation and missions." The resolution affirmed the strategic, historic significance of the General Offensive and Uprising of Tet Mau Than, the great accomplishments in 1968 and the spring of 1969 on the southern battlefield, and the great, strategic victory of the people's war against the war of destruction in the North. The Political Bureau also dealt severely with our difficulties, weaknesses, and deficiencies. Some of those difficulties were caused by the enemy's fierce counteroffensive carried out by extremely barbarous schemes, but in some respects they were due to the fact that we had not analyzed the enemy and ourselves accurately and promptly, to failure to fully understand the Party's policies and slogans, to weak organization of implementation, etc.

But it was clear that "the U.S. imperialists have suffered a very heavy defeat in all regards; their aggressive will has clearly been shaken and they have been forced to deescalate step-by-step. It will be difficult for them to maintain their war of aggression on the present scale over a long period of time,"

The Political Bureau estimated that the enemy had very little capability to add large numbers of troops, and expand the war throughout the nation and that the war could develop in one of two ways:

-- First, because of heavy losses and major difficulties the U.S. would be forced to conclude the war early, by means of a political solution they could accept.

-- Second, if we did not attack with sufficient strength and the U.S. was able to partly recover from its difficulties, it would try to prolong the war in the South for a certain period of time.

In both of those eventualities, in order to create pressure on us, the U.S., when concluding the war could, under certain circumstances, resume its bombing and shelling of the North or expand the war to Laos and Kampuchea.



The question of what course the war would take depended on our offensive strength militarily and politically and on the degree of the military, political, economic, and financial difficulties the war caused the U.S. in the South, in the U.S. itself, and in the world.

In analyzing Nixon's strategy of "Vietnamizing the war," the Political Bureau regarded it as being a policy that emerged in a situation of defeat and deadlock. It was full of internal contradictions that could not be overcome. Despite that, the enemy still had relative strengths with regard to troop strength, firepower, mobility, occupied territory, and economic and military potential.

But if we continued to have sufficient combined strength with which to attack, it was certain that their contradictions and weaknesses would become even more serious and that their strengths would diminish. And it was certain that we could defeat the enemy's new strategic plots and policies. The U.S. could not escape total defeat.

The Political Bureau observed that "we now have a great opportunity for rushing ahead on the crest of victory, promoting an all-round, continuous offensive, taking a new, very basic step forward, and defeating the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists."

The Political Bureau stressed the necessity of fully understanding and grasping the slogan of all-round offensive and the relationship among the three areas, resolutely grasping and developing our status of continuous offensive and encirclement in the cities, promoting the liberation of the rural areas, mastering most of the strategic, highly populated rural areas, consolidating and mastering the mountain region and the contiguous area, and doing a good job of preparing the battlefield so that our main-force troops could annihilate large numbers of the enemy. Our strategic slogan was to fight a protracted fight and rely principally on ourselves, while creating and grasping the opportunity to take great leaps forward.

8 May: The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam issues a declaration regarding its 10-Point Solution.

At the 16th meeting of the Paris Conference on Vietnam comrade Tran Buu Kiem, head of the delegation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, presented 10 points regarding the "Principles and major contents of an all-round solution to the Vietnam problem, in order to contribute to the restoration of peace in Vietnam."

The all-round 10-point solution delineated the border between ourselves and the enemy and distinguished clearly between two different kinds of problems: 1. Problems between the U.S. imperialists -- the aggressors -- and the anti-imperialist Vietnamese people; 2. Problems among the Vietnamese.

The withdrawal of U.S. troops belonged to the first type of problem. In order to end the war it was necessary to withdraw all U.S. troops and the troops of U.S. vassals from South Vietnam without any preconditions. The matter of the armed forces in the South belongs to the second category of problems: those to be

resolved by the Vietnamese parties. The U.S. position that both sides withdraw their forces placed the aggressors on a par with the victims of aggression and therefore was unacceptable.

The right of the people of the South to handle their own affairs belonged to the second category of problems. The Saigon administration was clearly a tool used by the U.S. aggressors to carry out their neocolonial policy in South Vietnam. That administration was opposed to all the legitimate aspirations of the people of the South. However, in a spirit of national conciliation the National Liberation Front advocated the policy of the political forces in the South negotiating the formation of a provisional coalition government in order to exercise their right of self-determination by means of a free, democratic election without foreign intervention.

Clearly dealing with those two key problems in the 10-point solution, we both adhered firmly to the principle of protecting the country's independence and sovereignty and had a flexible strategy so that the U.S. troops could withdraw from Vietnam without "losing face." But the U.S. imperialists, who were obstinate and still had many ambitious, rejected that solution. That caused the people of the world to see more clearly the unjust, reactionary nature of the U.S. war of aggression. The world popular front in support of our people's fight against the U.S. aggressors was further strengthened and expanded.

6 to 8 June: The National People's Congress of South Vietnam forms the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and a Council of Government Advisers.

After the "simultaneous uprisings" of 1960 revolutionary administrations in the form of Self-Management Committees appeared in each locality and region. During the general offensive and simultaneous uprising period the matter of overthrowing the enemy's central administration was posed and the formation of a central revolutionary administration became a practical, urgent requirement both internally and externally, for in the South the liberated area had been expanded and consolidated, there were strong revolutionary armed forces, and there were powerful political forces in the united national front.

In view of that requirement, the National People's Congress of South Vietnam met and approved a resolution setting up the Republic of South Vietnam. It unanimously elected a Provisional Revolutionary Government headed by President Huynh Tan Phat and a Council of Government Advisers of which comrade Nguyen Huu Tho served as the chairman. It appealed for the soldiers and people of the South to pursue the enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation to complete victory.

President Ho Chi Minh and Premier Pham Van Dong sent a congratulatory telegram to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the Council of Government Advisers. The Standing Committee of the National Assembly and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration which stated that the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam elected by the National People's Congress of South Vietnam was the legal government and the true representative of the people of South Vietnam. Our soldiers and people of the North were extremely enthusiastic over that great victory.

Internationally, the governments of the fraternal socialist countries and of many peace-loving, justice-loving countries congratulated our people for that victory. In June 1969, 23 countries recognized the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. Twenty-one of those countries established diplomatic relations.

The emergence of the Republic of South Vietnam was a victory of great significance in the long struggle of the people of the South in the process of winning political power for the people, building a revolutionary administration, and perfecting that administrative system in order to propel the revolutionary war to victory.

The emergence of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam created a situation of two governments existing side-by-side and was a strong blow against the U.S. imperialists' plot to use the puppet administration as a tool for carrying out its neocolonialism and as a basis of support in prolonging the war. It also defeated all bogus schemes of the U.S.-puppets about the so-called "constitutional" and "legal" nature of the puppet administration. It once again affirmed that the revolutionary administration of the people of the South was certain to be victorious and that the lackey, country-selling puppet administration was certain to collapse.

20 July: Final appeal of President Ho Chi Minh.

On 20 July 1969, exactly 15 years after the signing of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh appealed for the soldiers and people of the entire country to persist in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to total victory. That was his final appeal.

President Ho Chi Minh praised our soldiers and people for having united as one, overcoming all sacrifices and hardships, fighting very heroically, and winning a glorious victory. He severely condemned the crimes and plots of the U.S. imperialists.

He affirmed that "The Vietnamese people resolutely demand that all U.S. troops and the troops of U.S. vassals be withdrawn, not only 25,000 or 250,000 or 500,000, but all of them, unconditionally. Only thereby can the U.S. regain its honor, prevent tens of thousands of U.S. youths from dying needlessly in South Vietnam, and avoid mourning and sorrow in tens of thousands of U.S. families.

"After the troops of the U.S. and its vassals are withdrawn and South Vietnam is completely liberated from foreign aggression, the Provisional Revolutionary Government, as stated in its ten-point solution, will organize a democratic general election so that the people of South Vietnam can determine their political system, elect a constituent assembly, draft a constitution, and set up an official coalition government for South Vietnam, without foreign intervention. As long as the U.S. troops and the puppet administration continue to exist in South Vietnam there cannot be a truly free and democratic general election.

"The U.S. imperialists have clearly been defeated but they are still unwilling to abandon their intention of holding onto the South of our country. The soldiers and people of our entire nation, a million acting as one, and manifesting revolutionary heroism, are not afraid of sacrifice or hardship, are determined to persist in and promote the resistance, and are determined to fight and win, fight until the U.S. troops are completely withdrawn, fight until the puppet army and administration collapse, liberate the South, defend the North, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland."

President Ho Chi Minh's appeal of 20 July 1969 exposed Nixon's barbarous war schemes and attitude of deceiving the people of the U.S. and of the world by gradually withdrawing U.S. troops from South Vietnam, and the plot of stationing U.S. troops in some areas of the South for a long period of time. Uncle Ho affirmed that "The present situation has completely changed, in a way favorable to us and unfavorable to the enemy," and that our soldiers and people demand that the U.S. troops "must be withdrawn completely and unconditionally" and are determined to fight until final victory. During the final hours of his life President Ho Chi Minh continued to fight for the enterprise of liberating the South, defending the North, and unifying the homeland. His appeal was a source of great inspiration for the soldiers and people of our entire nation, especially those in the South, who were fighting stubbornly under complicated circumstances at the end of 1969.

3 September: President Ho Chi Minh passes away, bequeaths a historic Testament. Party Central Committee issues appeal.

At a time when the anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation was entering its most fierce phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory, our people suffered a very painful loss: at 0947 on 3 September 1969 President Ho Chi Minh passed away. The Party Central Committee held an urgent plenary session and approved appeal "To the cadres, Party members, soldiers, and compatriots throughout our country and our compatriots abroad." The Military Commission of the Party Central Commission and the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army also sent an appeal "To all cadres, soldiers, national defense workers and personnel, Party members, and Youth Union members in the people's armed forces."

The death of President Ho Chi Minh created a very strong, deep, and universal sorrow throughout the nation as well as in the world. Along with our people, the fraternal socialist countries and 10 nationalist countries organized national mourning or bereavement for President Ho Chi Minh, and more than 40 delegations from the socialist countries arrived to participate in President Ho Chi Minh's funeral in Hanoi. More than 23,000 telegrams and letters were sent by heads of state, Party and state leadership organs, mass organizations, and progressives of more than 120 countries to console our people in their sorrow. Many countries of the world organized activities in many different forms to commemorate Chairman Ho Chi Minh. In the U.S. and a number of Western European countries the masses concluded memorial services for President Ho Chi Minh by demonstrating and marching against the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists.

In May 1969, before he passed away, President Ho Chi Minh wrote a Testament to our entire Party and population. In beginning his Testament he wrote, "Our people's anti-U.S. resistance for national salvation, even if we must experience even more



sacrifice and hardship, is certain to win a complete victory." He also wrote, "The anti-U.S. resistance war may be prolonged. Our people may have to sacrifice much wealth and manpower. Even so, we must be resolved to fight the U.S. until we win final victory." "No matter what the hardships, our people are certain to win a complete victory. The U.S. imperialists are certain to have to get out of our country. Our homeland will certainly be unified. The people of the North and the South will certainly be reunited in the same house." In his historic Testament, Uncle Ho carefully and profoundly instructed our entire people and entire army, and bequeathed limitless love for the future generations.

On the morning of 9 September 1969, at Ba Dinh Square, more than 100,000 people participated in the solemn funeral of President Ho Chi Minh. At the funeral comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, read the Testament of President Ho Chi Minh and a eulogy, and spoke of the five unshakable oaths of our entire Party and population.

Carrying out the instructions in his Testament with regard to the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, our entire population 1 million as one, "transformed sorrow into revolutionary activity, bravely carried on the great work of President Ho, and achieved his ideals and aspirations." (Appeal of the Party Central Committee.)

The passing away of President Ho was an extremely great loss for our Party, people, and armed forces, and for all of progressive mankind. He bequeathed to us a very precious legacy: his great work, thought, virtue, and style.

"Holding high the determined-to-fight-and-win flag bestowed by Uncle Ho, with a spirit of rushing forward on the crest of victory the people's armed forces must, along with the entire population, pursue the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to complete victory, liberate the South, defend the North, advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland, and respond to the sacred appeal of President Ho: "As long as there remain aggressors in our country we must continue to fight to sweep them out." (Appeal of the Military Commission of the Party Central Commission and the High Command of the Vietnam People's Army.

1969: Faced with the collapse of their "limited war" strategy, the U.S. imperialists shift over to carrying out the strategy of "Vietnamizing the war" in South Vietnam.

After our great victory in the Tet Mau Than [1968] general offensive and uprising, the U.S. President Johnson was forced to adopt the policy of "de-Americanizing" the war. That policy had taken form in the process of defeat of the "limited war" strategy, which was full of contradictions. The U.S. was confronted with an inescapable contradiction between the fact that the large U.S. aggressor army was bogged down in the South and its global strategic aspirations. On the battlefield, the U.S. imperialists could not continue their "search and destroy" and "pacification" strategy but had to hastily shift over to the defensive and carry out a strategy of "clear and hold" and "defense in depth," which was contrary to the desires of the U.S. They continued to use U.S. troops and puppet troops as the two strategic forces. That strategy was proposed by General Abrams and was approved by the U.S. government.

That strategy was intended to fulfill the following requirements:

- Holding the cities, the military bases, the important lines of communication, and the highly populated, wealthy lowland areas.
- Avoiding the inflicting of heavy losses on the U.S. troops.
- Preventing the disintegration and collapse of the puppet army and administration.

The "de-Americanization" policy of Johnson had been implemented only a short time when Nixon, who represented the most reactionary and obstinate war-loving powers in the U.S. monopoly capital circles, because of the bankruptcy of the global "flexible response" strategy came up with the "Nixon Doctrine" and the "real deterrence" military strategy. Nixon's goal was to restore the strength and position of the U.S. and its role as a superpower which led the "free world." Nixon brought forth a new global strategy with three basic principles: 1. U.S. power; 2. The sharing of responsibility; 3. Readiness to negotiate from a position of strength. It was a strategy of retreat because of the collapse of the war of aggression in Vietnam, but it was also intended to retain the U.S. aspirations. At the same time Nixon, who was very practical, took advantage of the collusion and treason of international reactionaries to implement the U.S. plot.

In Asia, Nixon adopted the policy of promoting regional alliances, especially in Southeast Asia. He especially emphasized the role of Japan and used South Vietnam as a testing ground for rallying the lackeys in Asia to suppress the revolutionary movement and regarded that as the key to success of the "Nixon Doctrine" in Asia.

With regard to the South of our country, Nixon changed Johnson's "de-Americanization" policy into a "Vietnamization" strategy, the basic objectives of which were still to hold onto Vietnam and stop the revolutionary movement in Indochina and Southeast Asia, while at the same time reducing the U.S. involvement in the land war and avoiding a disgraceful defeat for the U.S. The true nature of that policy was using Vietnamese to fight Vietnamese, and using Indochinese to fight Indochinese, with U.S. munitions and commanders. It was an integral part of a global strategy in which the U.S. imperialists still had high hopes.

Nixon's "Vietnamization" strategy was identical to the "de-Americanization" policy of Johnson in the withdrawal of U.S. troops, in the maintenance and strengthening of the puppet army and administration in order to keep the South in the orbit of U.S. neocolonialism, and in the status of defeat, passivity, and deescalation. But it must be noted that the "Vietnamization" strategy opened the way for a new plan by new powers in the U.S. who were represented by Nixon.

If "de-Americanization," the method of deescalating the war during the final phase of the hapless Johnson administration, was a plan to merely withdraw U.S. troops, "Vietnamization" would withdraw an important part of the U.S. troops in order to reduce the difficulties in the U.S. and avoid an excessively obvious defeat that could harm U.S. interests in the U.S. and in the world, and to gain time in order to create a balance that would allow the U.S. to prolong the situation. On that basis, the U.S. would negotiate with us from a position of strength.

That was a new strategic policy, an all-round military, political, and economic plan that was intended to maintain the U.S. neocolonial regime in South Vietnam. That was clearly stated by Nixon on 18 February 1970, when he discussed that strategy within the scope of the "Nixon Doctrine": "Vietnamization is not a substitute for negotiations but will serve to further the negotiations."

Internationally, Nixon sought all ways to ally with Chinese expansionism and hegemonism and use Vietnam as something to be bartered between each other, in order to limit aid for our resistance war so that the revolutionary movement in the South of our country would "gradually weaken and wither away," and stepped up diplomatic activities in support of the "Vietnamization" strategy.

The "Nixon Doctrine" was tried out first in Vietnam, so the Nixon clique made very great, very concentrated efforts to carry it out in a barbarous, wily manner in three forms, which they called the war to win control of the population, the strangulation war, and the destruction war. They wanted to create a kind of combined counterrevolutionary violence with maximum strength. They combined political, economic, and cultural schemes with espionage warfare in order to eliminate the infrastructure of the revolution and build the infrastructure of neocolonialism.

Just after the appearance of Nixon's "Vietnamization" strategy the Political Bureau of our Party Central Committee, meeting in April 1969, regarded it as a U.S. policy that had been adopted in a situation of defeat and stalemate, and as being full of internal contradictions that could not be overcome:

--First, they had been forced to passively deescalate out of defeat and weakness, but they wanted to be able to deescalate from a position of strength; they wanted to reduce their forces and expenses but also wanted to create strength.

--Second, they had to deescalate and gradually withdraw the U.S. troops but also wanted to strengthen the puppets so that they could replace the U.S. troops, some think the puppet troops could not do while there were still more than 500,000 U.S. troops.

--Third, they were forced to deescalate and withdraw U.S. troops as soon as possible in order to reduce casualties and war expenditures, but the puppet army was becoming weaker so the U.S. had to prolong the war, and the more they prolonged the war the more casualties and difficulties rose to levels unacceptable to the U.S.

--Fourth, if the U.S. could not withdraw its troops the internal contradictions within the U.S. ruling circles and the contradiction between the people and the U.S. government would become increasingly serious. But if the U.S. troops were withdrawn the puppets would be in even greater danger of collapsing. The puppets felt that they were being abandoned, so the contradictions between the U.S. and the puppets and the contradictions within the puppet factions would become increasingly fierce.

Fifth, in applying the "clear and hold" military strategy, at a time when the war objectives of the U.S. were committing aggression, winning control of the population and occupying land, it was necessary to take the offensive. Since their offensives and counter offensives had been defeated, how could a defensive strategy help the U.S. attain its aggressive goals?

--Sixth, the U.S.-puppet forces would not increase but might decrease. The responsibilities of the puppet army would be very heavy and they could not do the job when we attacked strongly.

The "Nixon Doctrine" and the "Vietnamization" strategy, although very wily and insidious, were conceived hastily and merely reflected the desperation, defeat, and decline of the U.S. imperialists, who were increasingly isolated politically, were divided internally, had poor morale, and had lost all confidence.

The bankruptcy of the "Vietnamization" strategy of the U.S. imperialists during the next few years proved that the above analysis by our Party was very correct and wise.

1970

January 1970: The Party Central Committee holds its 18th Plenum.

The great victory of the general offensive and uprising of the spring of 1968 led the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation to a new phase, the phase of winning a decisive victory.

In order to lead the resistance war in the new phase, in January 1970 the Party Central Committee held its 18th Plenum to review the development of the war situation since the beginning of the 1968 spring season, especially to review the situation in 1969, and to set forth policies and missions regarding the major tasks which were appropriate to the new developments of the situation.

The Party Central Committee agreed unanimously with the Political Bureau resolutions which correctly evaluated and analyzed the situation and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves and the enemy, and the predictions of the Political Bureau regarding possible developments in the situation.

With regard to the characteristics of that phase, the resolution of the 18th Plenum observed that we were developing the offensive strategy of revolutionary war to a new height and creating a new strategic situation in the war, for we were carrying out a general offensive-general uprising at a time when the enemy still had large forces. Therefore, the new phase would be a long process, an extremely difficult, fierce, and complicated phase. With regard to the enemy, the U.S. imperialists, reorienting their strategy and carrying out their plot to "Vietnamize the war," were concentrating on resolving the question of how many U.S. troops should and could be withdrawn, and withdrawn over what period of time, so that the puppets would not fall apart and so that Vietnam would not become a problem in Nixon's 1972 presidential campaign.

The decisive period would be the latter part of 1970 and 1971, during which time we would have to resolutely step-up our all-round attacks and smash the enemy's "Vietnamization" plot.

The Party Central Committee set forth the following mission for the new phase: "Mobilizing the greatest possible efforts on the part of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both parts of our country; building on



the victories that have been won; persisting in and promoting the resistance war; continuing to comprehensively, continuously, and strongly develop our offensive strategy; promoting the military, political, and economic offensive, in combination with the diplomatic offensive; both attacking and endeavoring to build increasingly larger and stronger military and political forces; defeating the enemy's plot to gradually deescalate and prolong the war in order to create a position of strength in hopes of maintaining their neocolonialism in South Vietnam; defeating the enemy's defensive strategic posture; creating a new transformation in the war situation and winning step-by-step victories leading to a decisive victory; and fighting until the U.S. must withdraw all of its troops and until the puppets collapse, thus creating the basic conditions for achieving an independent, democratic, peaceful, and neutral South and advancing to the unification of the nation."

The Party Central Committee corrected the deficiencies of the recent period and stressed the necessity of correctly applying the slogan of promoting an all-round offensive; attacking militarily, politically, and diplomatically; putting into effect the slogan of attacking in all three areas; correctly applying the strategic slogan of protracted fighting, and on that basis endeavoring to win a decisive victory within a relatively short period of time by defeating the enemy's defensive strategy in the new phase, defeating the scheme of the U.S. and its lackeys to "Vietnamize the war," and smashing the aggressive will of the U.S. imperialists.

With regard to the fighting the Central Committee deemed it necessary to step-up the conventional fighting by the main-force troops, and that it was necessary to resolutely bring about a strong transformation in the local guerrilla warfare movement and to strongly develop all three kinds of troops, with emphasis on the elite forces of all three kinds, and strengthen the on-the-spot armed forces.

The Party Central Committee stressed that the rear-services task was one of strategic importance and the importance of organizing truly solid strategic rear-services echelons and doing a good job of ensuring campaign and tactical rear services, with emphasis on developing the on-the-spot rear services capabilities.

It foresaw that the situation in Kampuchea could become complicated, that the supply route to Nam Bo and party the supply route to the Central Highlands, could be cut off, and that it was necessary to begin the construction of a pipeline network, develop the river routes, and increase the scale of the land routes.

In view of that situation, special attention was paid to coordinating in combat with the Laotian soldiers and people in central and southern Laos, and regarded that as an urgent, pressing requirement the good fulfillment of which required active advance preparations.

While paying attention to all three strategic areas, it was necessary to strengthen the Party's leadership in the cities and promote the military and political struggle in the rural areas, launch a high tide of mass uprisings, endeavor to win and keep the people, expand the liberated area, and defeat the enemy's plan to "pacify" the rural areas.

With regard to the North, in the period following the cessation of U.S. bombing it was necessary to continue the enterprise of urgently building socialism, have a plan for fulfilling the sacred responsibility of the great rear area for the great

front line and always be prepared to fight and fight well, defeat all armed provocation plots or plots to expand the war of aggression of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys, endeavor to fulfill our international responsibilities and aid the Laotian revolution, and prepare to coordinate closely with the Laotian soldiers and people in order to cope with the worst possible contingencies should the enemy expand the war to Laos and Kampuchea because of their passivity and defeat in the South.

The resolution of the 18th Plenum of the Party Central Committee made a correct, creative analysis of the characteristics of the situation, clearly pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of ourselves and the enemy, and expressed determination to step up the all-round offensive. The Party Central Committee also provided specific guidance regarding our actions should the U.S. imperialists expand the war to Kampuchea and Laos. We would continue to maintain the offensive, inflict heavy losses on the enemy, win a great victory, and fulfill the requirements of "creating a new transformation in the war situation, win step-by-step victories, and advance to the winning of a decisive victory."

February 1970: Publication of the work "Under the Glorious Flag of the Party, for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism Advance to the Winning of New Victories" by comrade Le Duan.

On the occasion of the three major anniversaries in 1970 (the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Party, the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lenin), our Party published theoretical works by the Party's leadership cadres, including the work "Under the Glorious Flag of the Party, for Independence, Freedom, and Socialism Advance to the Winning of New Victories" by comrade Le Duan.

It was an important document of our Party, a work with the distinctive flavor of Vietnamese revolutionary theory which contributed to further illuminating our Party's correct, creative revolutionary line and the great revolutionary thought of President Ho Chi Minh, the teacher of our country's revolution. The work profoundly generalized the basic problems regarding the theory and practice of the Vietnamese revolution and presented in a relatively complete and systematic manner the basic experiences of our country's revolution, signified an important development of Vietnamese revolutionary theory and of the process of recapitulating the experiences of our people's revolutionary struggle, and further enriched our country's fund of revolutionary theory.

The work stated that the most important factor determining victory was the leadership of our Party, with its independent, autonomous, correct, and creative political line and military line. The Party's line was one of holding high the banners of national independence and socialism, simultaneously fulfilling two closely interrelated revolutionary missions -- the people's democratic national revolution in the South and the socialist revolution in the North -- in order to achieve the common objectives of completing the people's democratic national revolution throughout the country, unifying the homeland, and creating conditions for advancing the entire nation to socialism. With that line, the Party was able to mobilize to the maximum degree the powerful forces of our people throughout the nation, combine the great frontline with the great rear area, combine the strength of our

people with the strength of the three revolutionary currents of the era, and create combined strength with which to fight and defeat the U.S.

That work, the crystallization of the collective intelligence of our Party and people over a period of 40 years of combat that was full of hardship and sacrifice but was extremely heroic, intelligent, creative, and full of glorious victories, reflected the absolute revolutionary stand and offensive revolutionary spirit of the working class and the tradition of resolute, unyielding struggle of the Vietnamese people.

The work also illuminated the basic problems of our Party's military line. That military line, which had been affirmed in many documents and resolutions of the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission, proved to be very correct and had a peerless strength because it was based directly on our Party's correct political line. The Party's strategic line and revolutionary methods in the democratic national revolution and line toward the socialist revolution referred to in that work were the political and theoretical bases of the basic matters in the Party's military line. Only by firmly grasping the revolutionary direction, objectives, and missions of the Party can one fully understand the political objectives of revolutionary warfare and our army's combat objectives. Only by clearly understanding the scientific deployment of large revolutionary forces can one fully understand the line of building the forces of revolutionary war and the people's armed forces. Only by being imbued with the revolutionary methods can one understand and creatively apply the war-waging mode and military art of people's war.

24 and 25 April: The High-Level Indochinese People's Conference.

On 18 March 1970 the U.S. imperialists ordered the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak lackeys to carry out a coup d'etat in Kampuchea and overthrow the Sihanouk government. Then, on 30 April, they embarked upon a military adventure by invading Kampuchea. Stepping up the "special war" in Laos and expanding the war to Kampuchea, the U.S. imperialists wanted to create conditions for "Vietnamizing" the war in South Vietnam while also making Saigon, Phnom Penh, and Bangkok into an effective axis for dividing, isolating, and repressing the resistance war of the people of the South and rule the people of the Indochinese countries and Southeast Asia.

But the situation did not develop in accordance with the calculations and desires of the U.S. A broad national front -- the "Kampuchean National United Front" -- was formed in Kampuchea, and the Kampuchean National Monarchy and the Kampuchean National Liberation Army. The people of Kampuchea were determined to arise and fight "against all aggressive plots and acts of the U.S. imperialists and for the overthrow of the dictatorship of their lackeys headed by Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, in order to build a democratic, peaceful, neutral, democratic, and prosperous and prosperous Kampuchea." (Program of the Kampuchean National United Front.)

With a spirit of militant solidarity against the common enemy -- the U.S. imperialists -- the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference, made up of the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, which met on 24 and 25 April 1970, was very successful and signified a new developmental step in the history of the militant solidarity of the people of the three countries and the history of the maturation and growth of the anti-imperialist Indochinese people.



During the opening session of the Conference comrade Le Duan said, "With the momentum of the victory of the national liberation struggle in our three countries, and in the very serious present situation caused by the intervention and aggression of the U.S. imperialists, the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference will strengthen the solidarity, and tighten the ranks, of the people of Kampuchea, Laos, and Vietnam, so that they can persist in and step up their stubborn, fierce combat and advance to winning a complete victory."

The Conference issued a joint declaration which had the nature of a fighting program of the people of the three Indochinese countries, and was at the same time a charter regarding the relationships among the peoples of the three neighboring countries, who were uniting against the common enemy.

The victory of the High-Level Conference of the people of the three Indochinese countries reflected the victories of the military and political struggle of the people of Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, and served to strongly stimulate that struggle. The fierce retaliatory blows struck against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys on the Indochinese battlefields in 1970-1971, especially on the Lao and Kampuchean battlefields, proved that the people of the Indochinese countries profoundly understood that the destinies of the three Indochinese countries were closely interrelated: none of them could live a tranquil, free life while the territory of another was still occupied by imperialist aggressors.

The victory of the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference was not only contrary to the intentions of the U.S. imperialists but was also a defeat for the expansionism and big-nation hegemonism of China, which wanted to sell out the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea to the U.S. for a profit, and was preparing a scheme of long-term expansionism in the Indochinese Peninsula. (When we decided to hold the High-Level Indochinese People's Conference, China campaigned for the convening of a conference of five countries and six sides to oppose Japan, in hopes of deflecting the revolutionary objectives of the three Indochinese countries. Failing at that, it sought all ways to direct the resistance wars of the three Indochinese countries for its own ugly purposes. But its scheme was rejected by the representatives of the three Indochinese countries.)

19 June: Resolution of the Political Bureau Conference regarding the "New Situation on the Indochinese Peninsula and Our New Missions."

Since the beginning of 1970 the U.S.-puppets had made very great efforts and carried out the most reckless acts of adventurism, especially on the Kampuchean and Laos battlefields, just as foreseen by the Political Bureau in April 1969 and the resolution of the 18th Plenum of the Party Central Committee in January 1970. Our soldiers and people, implementing the resolutions of the Party and the sacred Testament of President Ho Chi Minh, closely allied with Kampuchea and Laos, and with a creative spirit, not regretting sacrifices, and overcoming all difficulties and hardships, won a great victory. Since then, the new developments in the war situation had posed many new problems. The Political Bureau concluded that it was possible to, and that it should, promptly set forth policies and leadership measures to advance the revolution to the winning of a decisive victory.



On 19 June 1970 the Political Bureau issued a resolution on "The new situation on the Indochinese Peninsula and our new mission."

After reviewing the developments regarding the enemy since the beginning of the year, the Political Bureau observed that "although heavily defeated, due to their extremely obstinate nature, and because they still have potential, the U.S. imperialists will seek ways to prolong the war, simultaneously deescalating and launching limited counteroffensives, simultaneously withdrawing U.S. troops and continuing adventuristic acts while in a passive, defeated state. They may also seek ways to expand the war of aggression to the countries of the Indochinese Peninsula in a manner, and to the degree, they consider appropriate and advantageous, to assist "Vietnamization" in South Vietnam and in order to suppress the Kampuchean and Laotian revolutions. At the same time, they will have their lackeys set up a new strategic line encompassing South Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos, and Thailand and endeavor to rally the other reactionary forces in Asia to help out the U.S. imperialists on the Indochinese battlefield and form regional alliances to suppress the national liberation movement, stop the influence of socialism, and prepare a staging area from which to attack the socialist camp."

On the basis of analyzing the weaknesses and strengths of the enemy, the Political Bureau set forth our new mission: "Mobilizing the greatest possible efforts on the part of the Party, the population, and the troops in both the South and the North of our country, strengthening the militant solidarity of the people of the three Indochinese countries, forming a united bloc with a common strategy, and persisting in and promoting the national-salvation wars of the people of the three countries against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys." Specifically:

With regard to South Vietnam, "the most important battlefield in the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation of the people of the three Indochinese countries," and the place where our forces and those of the enemy are concentrated, so our victory and the enemy's defeat would determine the development of the political and military situation on the Indochinese Peninsula. The specific mission of the South of our country was to "persist in and promote the resistance war, more closely combine military struggle with political struggle and military proselyting, continue to build an increasingly stronger offensive strategy, annihilate large U.S.-puppet military forces, annihilate and disintegrate an important part of the lackey puppet army, concentrate forces to smash their 'pacification' plan and 'Vietnamization' plot, and defeat their defensive strategy to prolong the war.

It was necessary to take advantage of the fact that the enemy were bogged down on the Kampuchean battlefield to step up our activities in the Mekong Delta and threaten Saigon and the other cities.

The Kampuchean battlefield, a recently created one, was the enemy's weakest link on the Indochinese Peninsula. There was being waged there a special kind of aggressive war, with local lackey forces supported by the U.S., with U.S. troops participating directly, and with the South Vietnamese puppet troops serving as the hard core. Our common mission was to "endeavor to help our friends grasp the opportunity, continue to develop their status of continuous offensive, and strongly advance the Kampuchean revolution. It was necessary to annihilate or rout the major part of the puppet army and administration at the various echelons; attack them so

they do not have time to consolidate; promote guerrilla warfare and mass uprisings in vast rural areas; develop and consolidate in all respects; surround, isolate, and attack the cities still controlled by the enemy; step up the political struggle; cut the lines of communication; sabotage the enemy's economic activities; and be prepared to defeat all of their plots to regain lost territory. "The matter of annihilating the South Vietnamese puppet army, the enemy's hard-core force on that battlefield, is a matter of strategic importance." In the immediate future, it would be necessary to step up the offensive in the direction of Phnom Penh, threaten the enemy's capital, and combine military attacks with mass uprisings, a coup d'etat, and military revolts.

With regard to the Laos battlefield, since the war had been expanded to Kampuchea, Laos had taken on an increasingly crucial importance, especially in central and southern Laos, for it was a corridor which connected the rear area in the north of our country with the South Vietnam and Kampuchea battlefields. Our mission was to "endeavor to assist and coordinate with our friends, continue to amplify the recent victories, resolutely attack the enemy in all respects, and advance the Laotian revolution. We must mobilize all efforts to annihilate an even more important part of the reactionaries' military forces and political forces, endeavor to expand and consolidate the vast liberated area in all respects in accordance with a comprehensive, long-range plan, step up guerrilla warfare and political struggle along the Mekong River, and step up the political struggle in the city." It was essential that during the coming period we helped our friends and joined them in expanding and developing the central-southern Laos area into an increasingly stronger base area, and in defending the strategic corridor, which was extremely important to us.

The North of our country was not only the great rear area for the great front line in the South, but was also the common rear area of the Laotian and Kampuchean revolutions. The mission of our people in the North was to "Mobilize manpower and materiel for the front and make the greatest possible contribution to the national-salvation anti-U.S. resistance war of our people in the South and of the people of Laos and Kampuchea," and to "truly manifest a spirit of revolutionary vigilance, always be prepared to fight and fight well, and defeat all provocative plots of the U.S. imperialists to expand their war of aggression."

Predicting the development of the situation, the Political Bureau observed that: "First, the U.S.-puppet could be defeated on the Kampuchean battlefield, which could exacerbate their contradictions and weaknesses, cause the situation in Kampuchea to undergo sudden changes, and create a good opportunity for us to win victory relatively quickly. Second, the revolution could develop victoriously but still have certain difficulties, the U.S. imperialists could continue to intensify and expand the war, and the war could become stalemated and be prolonged. We must try to bring about the first possibility, defeat the plots of the U.S. imperialists to prolong and intensify their war of aggression, win step-by-step victories, advance to winning a decisive victory, and chase the U.S. imperialists from the Indochinese Peninsula.

In order to fulfill that strategic mission, the Political Bureau stressed the necessity of grasping and correctly applying the laws of people's war and a strategic motto appropriate to the new situation, create a strategic offensive status in the Indochinese theater by making all-out efforts to build increasingly stronger

armed forces and political forces on the battlefields, go all-out in building up the direct rear area, expand and strengthen the base areas, and do a good job of the strategic and campaign rear-services work.

The June 1970 resolution of the Political Bureau provided very important, timely guidance for our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, at a time when the U.S. imperialists were expanding the war throughout the Indochinese Peninsula. With its accurate analysis and evaluation of the forces and strategic positions of the enemy and of ourselves, the resolution set forth correct, incisive missions and requirements and directed our entire Party, entire army, and entire population to unite closely with the two fraternal countries in order to advance together to the winning of a new victory.

1970: Our armed forces and the soldiers and people of Kampuchea defeat the U.S.-puppet operations, enable Kampuchean revolution to take a great-leap-forward developmental step into the new phase.

After the reactionary coup d'etat overthrew the Sihanouk government, on 30 April 1970 the U.S. imperialists mobilized 100,000 troops, made up of 50,000 U.S. troops and 50,000 Saigon puppet troops, invaded Kampuchea and expanded the war on the Indochinese Peninsula. Their objective was to get rid of Kampuchean neutrality, which did not benefit the schemes of the U.S. imperialists and bring Kampuchea into the U.S. orbit; interdict our supply route passing through Kampuchea, destroy the direct strategic rear area of the Nam Bo battlefield, first of all breaking up the threat of our attacks on their vital areas; and upset our preparations to launch large-scale attacks on Saigon and in the Mekong Delta.

Between 30 April and 30 June they carried out 23 operations in east and southeast Xoai Rieng (29 May - 6 June) in the Mimot-Snul area (1 May to 30 June), and in the Takeo-eastern Kampot area (17 May to 22 May), with 75 infantry battalions (12 of them U.S. battalions), 22 artillery battalions, and 7 mechanized battalions and squadrons. The area of operations was six provinces along the Vietnam-Kampuchea border (Takeo, Kampot, Kongpong Cham, Xoai Rieng, Pray Veng, Ratanakire), extending 30-40 kilometers -- at one point 80 kilometers -- into Kampuchea.

When the U.S. sent troops across the border into Kampuchea the Party Central Committee promptly instructed the Central Office, South Vietnam [COSVN] and Regional Military Commission: "Make good use of time in preparing forces and plans to, along with our friends, occupying and expanding the liberated area in seven border provinces, from our border to the bank of the Mekong River, while also helping our friends set up guerrilla zones in the southwest, north, and northwest. The main-force troops in the border area not only have the mission of continuing to fight the U.S.-puppet forces in our country but also have the mission of attacking reso-  
resolutely, in coordination with our friends, to broaden the front, expand the rear-area liberated area in Kampuchea, and defeat the U.S. plot."

The Political Bureau observed that although the U.S. coup d'etat and invasion of Kampuchea created a number of difficulties for us, the U.S. was deescalating in Vietnam and the puppet troops, who were being stretched out to replace the U.S. troops, now had to man a new front, and the Lon Nol army was very weak. That battlefield was the enemy's weakest link in Indochina. It was an act of adventurism by the enemy and was a very serious mistake on their part. We had to fight



rapidly, strongly, and effectively, organize a new offensive battlefield position, and launch an all-round offensive before they have stabilized their position.

The Political Bureau regard Kampuchea as "a rather important area internationally, so we must prevent or limit the presence of international reactionary forces there. We had to work rapidly and strongly; the more strongly the Kampuchean people arose the more perplexed the imperialists and the other reactionary forces who had eagerly intervened in Kampuchea became.

The observations and directives of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee were very timely and accurate. Therefore, when the U.S.-puppets launched their operations our armed forces prepared to fight the enemy ceaselessly and inflict heavy losses on them, especially in the Chup, Dam Be, and Snul areas.

On 30 June 1970, because of their heavy defeats and the pressure of the people of the world, the U.S. army had to withdraw from Kampuchea and only provide heavy air support (170 tons of bombs per day) for the Saigon puppet army, to help that gang hold out with 20 battalions.

Our armed forces, in coordination with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, by June 1970 killed or wounded 170,000 U.S.-puppet soldiers, more than 1,500 military vehicles -- including 750 tanks and armored vehicles -- were knocked out or set afire, and 20 airplanes were shot down. By November 1970 we had killed 54,785 of the enemy (including 13,770 Americans), wiped out 9 battalions and 71 infantry companies (2 battalions and 19 companies were U.S.), inflicted heavy losses on a regiment and 17 battalions (including 5 U.S. battalions), 83 infantry companies (including 15 U.S. companies), captured 445 weapons of the various kinds, destroyed 620 airplanes, 3,375 vehicles, 66 ships and boats, 374 artillery pieces, and 78 depots, and completely liberated 5 provinces -- Stung Treng (May 1970), Mandukiri, and Preah Vihear -- and liberated out of the rural areas in 10 other provinces. The liberated area in Kampuchea became a vast area that encompassed 61 of the 102 districts and 4,545,000 of Kampuchea's 7 million people.

Although U.S.-puppet operations in Kampuchea in 1970 caused us a certain number of difficulties but they could not fulfill the requirements. As Westmoreland admitted in his book "A Soldier's Report": "The raid into Cambodia, which began on 30 April, achieved good results (?), although only part of the enemy's supply caches were destroyed and we failed to locate COSVN headquarters which, unfortunately, the President told the press was the objective of the operation." However, there were other important defeats which Westmoreland dared not mention: they lost much manpower and many war facilities in those operations. The fighting against U.S. aggression tightened the militant solidarity among the people of the three Indochinese countries; the revolutionary movement in Kampuchea arose strongly; and when the U.S. and its puppets sent troops outside the country, in South Vietnam, favorable conditions were created for us to attack "pacification" and to annihilate the enemy, so we achieved many important results.

1970: The Pathet Lao troops and the Vietnamese volunteer troops expel the enemy from the Plaine des Jarres and liberate Attapeu and Saravan provinces.



February 1970: The Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory.

In August 1969 the U.S. and its lackeys in Laos launched operation "Cu Kiet" to occupy the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang area. They were determined to hold onto that area to serve as a staging area from which to advance deeply into the liberated area and threaten Sam Nua, a revolutionary base area in Laos. That operation was also intended to coordinate with the implementation of the "Vietnamization" plan in South Vietnam and threaten North Vietnam from the west, while also carrying out the strategy of "defense at a distance" by defending the Mekong defense line of the U.S. and Thailand and protecting the headquarters lair of the bandit Vang Pao at Long Cheng and shoring up the morale of the lackeys, which had declined after their defeats at Muong Xui. That was the greatest military effort to date of the U.S. and their lackeys in Laos. They concentrated a large force: 10 special battalions, 4 garrison battalions, 1 ranger battalion 1 mobile battalion, 3 special reconnaissance battalions, many bandit gangs, and 5,000 Thai soldiers wearing Laotian uniforms, a total of 12,000 troops with the support of 5 squadrons of U.S. fighter-bombers and 100 helicopters used for mobility and supply, along with a large amount of artillery. The operation was under the command of the CIA, exercised by means of a joint U.S.-Thai-Vang Pao command. Taking advantage of the rainy season, the enemy troops were able to occupy the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang area and advanced to the gateways to the Vietnam border, such as Ban Bau-Nong Het. Immediately afterwards, the main-force and local troops of the Pathet Lao, the Vietnamese volunteer troops, and the units of the patriotic neutralist forces, along with the Laotian militia and guerrillas, continuously and fiercely attacked the enemy. The Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces, stopping the enemy and penetrating deeply into their formation, in 5 months of fighting (September 1969 to January 1970) knocked out of action 4,500 of the enemy, shot down or destroyed 13 airplanes, and inflicted heavy losses on 6 enemy battalions.

At the beginning of February 1970 the Laotian Military Commission decided to annihilate the enemy forces and completely liberate the Plaine des Jarres-Xing Khoang area. The offensive began on the night of 10 February 1970 and by the end of 27 February 1970 the enemy had been pushed out of their final positions in that area. Some 6,000 of the enemy (most of them special forces) were knocked out of action and thousands of other fled. Our friends and we captured or destroyed thousands of weapons of the various types -- including 25 artillery pieces and large-caliber mortars, captured or destroyed 70 military vehicles (including tanks and armored vehicles), shot down or destroyed 42 airplanes of the various types, and captured or destroyed more than 100 radio sets. That great Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory was a heavy blow against the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys smashed their greatest military effort in a strategically important area in Laos, set back the U.S. strategic plan and scheme in Laos, and presented them with new difficulties and perplexities. The comparison of forces continued to change in favor of the Laotian revolution.

April to June 1960: Liberation of Attapeu and Saravan.

After the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang victory, the Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces continually attacked the enemy and expelled the enemy from the Pac Beng area (Udomsay) and northwestern Laos and liberated a vast area

extending 100 kilometers along the Mekong River. Combining military attacks with psychological warfare, they cleared out all of the bandits in Sam Nua Province and part of Luang Prabang Province, took the initiative in attacking and wiping out the enemy in the buffer zone in Xieng Khoang and Beri Khamsay provinces, created and consolidated an integrated position in the two provinces, etc. During the night of 28 April and early morning of 29 April the Laotian-Vietnamese revolutionary armed forces in southern Laos, in order to defeat the U.S. imperialists' plot to isolate and strangle the revolutionary wars in South Vietnam and Kampuchea, launched an attack on Attapeu, a base for bandits and commandoes who specialized in attacking the liberated area and the tri-border area. The enemy forces there included the BV43 battalion, the 4B1 battalion, a company of armed government officials, and a police company, totalling 800 in all. By 30 April the enemy garrison totalled only 300 men, who had to abandon Attapeu and go to Nha Hon (Mt. Phu Luong on the Bolovens Plateau). On 1 May 1970 the city of Attapeu and the surrounding area, with a population of 10,000 were liberated.

After the victory at Attapeu, the Laotian-Vietnamese troops launched one attack after another and defeated many enemy counterattacks. In June 1970 they attacked the city of Saravan. The enemy troops there included the BV 41 battalion, reinforced with a 105mm howitzer, two 106.7 mm mortars, and four armored vehicles. After suffering a heavy defeat they had to flee from the city of Saravan and a number of positions around the city. On 9 June 1970 the Pathet Lao armed forces took over management of the city and the surrounding area.

The Plaine des Jarres victory and the liberation of Attapeu and Saravanne in Laos, along with the liberation of northeastern Kampuchea in the first half of 1970, had a very great strategic significance. They created a vast integrated strategic area which connected the North of our country with northern Laos, central and southern Laos, western Tri-Thien, the Central Highlands, Nam Bo, and northeastern Kampuchea, and formed a solid revolutionary base area in the central part of Indochina, and strong battlefield positions for the three Indochinese countries which bordered on one another and thus were even stronger. The U.S. imperialists expanded their war of aggression to all of Indochina in hopes of isolating the revolutionary movement in the South of our country, cutting off the North's aid for the South, and weakening our people's resistance war. But with the all-out assistance of the fraternal people of Laos our strategic supply route was even expanded to the western Central Highlands and, with a combination of land routes and river routes, stretched uninterrupted to the South.

The three countries of the Indochinese Peninsula, because of the acts of aggression of the common enemy, became a single front and in fact became a unified anti-U.S. theater, the most decisive battlefield of which was South Vietnam.

1971

February 1971: The Party Central Committee holds its 19th Plenum.

In February 1971 the Party Central Committee held its 19th Plenum to make decisions regarding economic construction and development and strengthening the socialist forces in the North. The plenum listened to reports and discussed our people's anti-U.S. national salvation struggle. This plenum, the first after 4 years of the

U.S. war of destruction, focused on resolving the North's economic problems and advancing the North's economy to large-scale socialist production.

In view of the situation of the U.S. imperialists' continuing to carry out adventurous acts to prolong and expand the war, the Party Central Committee once again affirmed that "Resisting the U.S. for national salvation is the foremost mission of our entire Party, entire army, and entire population." The plenum's resolution stated the present mission of our Party, army, and population as being "carrying out the sacred Testament of President Ho Chi Minh, persisting in and promoting the resistance war, manifesting a will to fight and win, advancing to winning a complete victory, liberating the South, defending the North, and advancing to the peaceful unification of the homeland."

February to March 1971: The Route 9-Southern Laos victory.

Because of their heavy defeats on the three Indochinese battlefields in 1970, the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys clearly realized their bogged-down position and bleak prospects as they began the year 1971. But they were very obstinate and unwilling to admit defeat, so they jumped into a new adventure in hopes of escaping from their deadlocked situation.

In February 1971 they launched a large strategic operation called "Lam Son 719" in the Route 9-southern Laos border area to attain the following objectives:

1. Destroying our strategic corridor and "strangle at the throat" our supply route to the South, in order to essentially halt the flow of supplies, since they had already cut off the sea route that ended at the port of Kompong Som;
2. Testing the South Vietnamese puppet troops in carrying out the "puppet infantry plus U.S. firepower" formula of the "Vietnamization" strategy by sending them to challenge the North Vietnamese main-force troops in the jungles-and-mountains area contiguous to the North, in order to, on that basis, complete the "Vietnamization" plan in 1972;
3. Setting up a barrier line to cut Indochina in two, create a strong position for themselves in the South of our country, threaten the North, and support their special war in Laos and war of aggression in Kampuchea.

We very accurately grasped their intentions and correctly predicted their operational plan, so we prepared a meticulous operational plan of our own. Our Party made the decision to, by means of a large, strategic counteroffensive campaign, win a strategic victory to change the situation on the Indochinese battlefield, inflict a basic defeat on the "Vietnamization" strategy and the plot of the U.S. imperialists to isolate our main-force units and push them out of the South, and advance the resistance war a step further.

On 9 February 1971 the Military Commission of the Party Central Commission directed our armed forces to respond to the following appeal of the Party Central Committee: "Concentrate forces, resolutely annihilate large numbers of the U.S.-puppet manpower and war facilities, defend by all means the supply routes to the fronts, and in coordination with the other battlefields and the fraternal people of Laos and Kampuchea, smash the military adventure acts of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys"; and to advance to winning total victory in the campaign.



With regard to the guiding thoughts of the fighting in the campaign, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee pointed out that it was necessary to be extremely positive and active, resourceful and flexible, and courageous, continually attack the enemy, fight to completely wipe out the enemy, master the battlefield, capture prisoners, capture weapons, win a smashing victory in the very first battle, exploit all fighting methods, combine small-scale, medium-scale, and large-scale fighting, fight the enemy while they are on the move, resolutely annihilate the enemy under all circumstances, take advantage of and create opportunities, make good use of time to fight and defeat the enemy; when the enemy come out, annihilate them, when the enemy bunch up, resolutely smash and annihilate them; when the enemy troops flee, resolutely pursue them; both annihilate the enemy and defend the supply lines, bases, and depots; pay attention to fighting enemy airplanes and to wiping out enemy mechanized facilities and artillery; and pay attention to anti-aircraft and anti-chemical activities, to feints, and to doing a good job of maintaining secrecy.

As far as the enemy were concerned, their campaign was one of the "Vietnamization" variety which was intended to win a military and political victory for the puppet army and administration, so they concentrated nearly all of the strategic reserve forces of the puppet army and part of the forces of I Corps. There were 47 infantry battalions, 9 armored squadrons, and 21 artillery battalions, most of them puppet units, while the U.S. contributed 7 infantry battalions and 2 mechanized battalions, but they served as rear-area reserve forces.

There were 45,000 enemy troops in all, 20,000 of which were from Saigon's most elite strategic reserve forces. There was a very high degree of coordination with the U.S. Air force, which had much modern technical equipment. With such forces, they were very subjective and calculated that by the second day of the operation they would have taken Xepon, and then advance to Savannakhet and form a barrier splitting Indochina into two.

From the very beginning the enemy were halted because they ran up against incessant counterattacks. They were attacked everywhere, and all of them were attacked. Our on-the-spot forces, in coordination with the mobile units and with the close cooperation of the armed Pathet Lao troops, attacked continuously and fought very bravely and skilfully. In 43 days of fighting the soldiers and people of Vietnam and Laos smashed the enemy's operation, killing more than 23,000 of the enemy, destroying or shooting down nearly 500 airplanes of the various kinds, and capturing nearly 600 military vehicles and 150 artillery pieces. The enemy troops remnants fled in all directions and many of them were captured, including a brigade commander. The battles at Ban Dong, Cha Ki bridge, Lao Bao, etc., were historic feats of arms of the Vietnamese and Laotian armed forces.

In coordination with the Route 9-Southern Laos battlefield, our soldiers and people from Tri-Thien to the Central Highlands, Zone 5, and Nam Bo launched widespread attacks against the enemy, especially in northern Quang Tri and the Central Highlands. In general, the situation on the southern battlefield clearly improved. The Laotian soldiers and people in northern and southern Laos coordinated very well, stepped up their attacks, developed their victories, and achieved shattering accomplishments: in southern Laos, on 13 February the soldiers and people of Laos attacked Long Cheng -- the ranger base of the CIA and Vang Pao; in lower Laos, on



10 March the revolutionary forces chased the enemy from the southeastern part of the Bolovens Plateau and after that, on the crest of victory entered Pac Soong and Ban Nhich and liberated the entire Bolovens Plateau (15 May to 11 June 1971).

On the Kampuchea battlefield, the revolutionary forces moved up close to Phonon Penh, attacked the Pochentong airfield, destroyed many airplanes, and killed enemy pilots. The greatest victory was the counteroffensive campaign along Route 7 and the defeat of the "Toan Thang" operation by Saigon puppet troops and Kampuchean puppet troops from 4 February to 17 April 1971.

With regard to the significance of Route 9-southern Laos victory the Political Bureau made the following evaluation:

First, the victory of that campaign was very great and had a strategic significance. In addition to the defeat of the large enemy operation on the Kampuchean battlefield, the victory on the southern Laos front created prospects for defeating the U.S. "Vietnamization" policy militarily.

The defeat of the most elite Saigon forces also weakened their hard-core role in implementing the Nixon Doctrine of using Indochinese to defeat Indochinese. Therefore, the victory had a very great significance with regard to the war situation, not only in the South of our country but also in the two neighboring countries.

Second, that victory was a brilliant victory of the line of resisting the U.S. for national salvation, the military line, and the war guidance art, of our Party in the phase of the implementation of the "Vietnamization" strategy, the high point of the process of adventurism to expand the war to all of Indochina. We firmly grasped the strategic offensive concept, created a new battlefield position, created a new strategic opportunity, and achieved close coordination among the soldiers and people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea in the spirit of Indochina being one battlefield, stepped up attacks to annihilate the enemy and destroy "pacification," and closely combined military, political, and diplomatic struggle.

Third, it was a successful application of campaign art, and was an exemplary large-scale annihilation campaign. It creatively developed fighting methods that were created in the process of revolutionary war which has a Vietnamese flavor. At the same time, it also provided us very basic experience in the guidance, organization, and development of armed forces, especially the main-force troops.

The Route 9-Southern Laos victory was a common victory of the three Indochinese countries in anti-U.S. solidarity. That victory was won on the basis of the new developments in the fight of the people of the three fraternal countries, with regard to which the people of each country made an important contribution.

January to May 1971: A counteroffensive and offensive on the Kampuchean battlefield.

4 February to 4 March: Defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" Operation of the Saigon puppet army.

The U.S. and its puppets had many hopes for that operation: surprising, surrounding, and annihilating an important part of our main-force units; destroying our

revolutionary bases, supply depots, and lines of communication; reopening Route 7; setting up a barrier line in eastern and northeastern Kampuchea; and winning a political victory to bolster the lackeys in Phnom Penh. They also regarded it as a major operation to coordinate with the "Lam Son 719" operation in the Route 9-Southern Laos area.

In order to ensure victory they threw in rather large numbers of troops. At the highest point, in Kompong Cham and Kratie provinces they used 34 infantry battalions, 5 armored regiments, and 8 artillery regiments totalling about 23,000 men, with 15 U.S. Air Force squadrons providing air support or transportation.

They divided into two major columns. The main column (19 battalions) started out from the Crech Kandom Crum base and surrounded the Chup plantation, while the secondary column (the 9th Regiment) started out from the Snul base and advanced northward. Furthermore, there were a number of small coordinating columns of Saigon puppet troops and Phnom Penh puppet troops. They intended to carry out the campaign from February to May 1971.

But the results of the operation were contrary to their expectations. They were continually attacked by our main-force units, were defeated step-by-step, and ultimately had to abandon the operation in March 1971. Our main attacks were the battle Kompong Cham, which lasted from 4 to 12 February, in which we attacked the enemy in the Chup area; a series of battles between 13 and 26 February in which we attacked the main enemy column, which had shifted over to the Dam Be-So Long area; and between 27 February and 3 April attacked enemy troops fleeing the Dam Be area.

Between 4 February and 17 April, in Kompong Cham and Kratie our forces, along with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, killed or wounded more than 17,000 of the enemy (180 Americans and 1,500 Phnom Penh puppet soldiers), captured 500 Saigon puppet troops, Phnom Penh puppet troops, and Americans, wiped out 9 infantry battalions and 4 armored squadrons, inflicted heavy damage on 2 armored regiments and 16 infantry battalions, set afire nearly 1,500 military vehicles (including 750 tanks and armored vehicles), shot down 200 airplanes, destroyed 180 artillery pieces, and captured 900 weapons. Most of those losses were incurred by the Saigon puppets' III Corps.

The defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" operation had a very important significance, for it smashed the final efforts of the enemy to carry out a large operation in Kampuchea, annihilated an important part of their manpower and, along with the Route 9-Southern Laos victory, created a new step in the decline of the Saigon puppet army, and was a strong blow against the U.S. "Vietnamization" plan to use the Saigon puppet army as the U.S. assault force in South Vietnam and in the Indochinese Peninsula.

25 to 31 May: The Snul victory.

Snul is a town in Kratie Province 184 kilometers northeast of Phnom Penh, 136 kilometers north of Saigon, and 20 kilometers from the Vietnam-Kampuchea border. It is situated at the intersection of strategic route 13 and 7.

Since Snul was so important, the U.S. and its puppets were determined to hold onto that position, even after the heavy defeat of the "Toan Thang 1-1971" operation, in hopes of maintaining a staging area from which to attack and occupy our base areas and control our activities during the 1971 rainy season. The Saigon puppet army units stationed there included "Armored Task Force No 8," made up of an infantry regiment of the 5th Infantry Division, a combined artillery battalion, and the 1st Armored Regiment of Military Region 3. On 20 May, threatened by attack they reinforced Snul with the 15th and 18th armored regiments and a ranger regiment.

Beginning on 25 May our main-force troops, in coordination with the soldiers and people of Kampuchea, surrounded and launched a strong attack against the enemy troops in Snul. All counterattacks by puppet infantry and armor to break the encirclement were broken up. The enemy suffered heavy losses with regard to infantry, military vehicles, and airplanes during the 5 days we encircled them. Faced with that perilous situation, in violation of Saigon's order to hold Snul at all costs, at noon on 30 May all of the enemy troops there withdrew from Snul to South Vietnam via Route 13. During the withdrawal, in the afternoon of 30 May, our troops ambushed, then surrounded and annihilated, the enemy infantry, all of the 1st Armored Regiment, and the combined artillery battalion, killed or wounded 1,500 of the enemy, captured 300, captured or destroyed nearly 200 military vehicles, shot down 40 airplanes, and captured more than 500 weapons, 500 tons of ammunition, and more than 100 radios.

May 1971: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee and the Committee's Military Commission meet to discuss the 1972 strategic offensive.

The strategic victories on the Kampuchea and Route 9-Southern Laos battlefields created a change in the situation that was advantageous to us.

On our country's southern battlefield, although the enemy's "pacification" plan to win control of the population was brought to a stop and pushed back, we were still unable to bring about a strategic transformation.

In view of that situation, in May 1971 the Political Bureau met to evaluate the situation, predict what the enemy would do next, and affirm the strategic opportunity. The Political Bureau set forth the following urgent mission for our soldiers and people: "Promptly grasping a good opportunity and, on the basis of the strategic motto of fighting for a long period of time, stepping up the military, political, and diplomatic offensives, developing the new strategic offensive status on both the southern battlefield and the Indochina battlefield, defeating the U.S. strategy to Vietnamize the war," defeat all important steps of their aggressive plan in Kampuchea and Laos, win a decisive victory in 1972, and force the U.S. imperialists to end the war by negotiating from a position of defeat, while also being prepared to persist in and promote the resistance war in the event that the war is prolonged."

At the beginning of June 1971 the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met to study the situation and organize the implementation of the Political Bureau's resolution. Reaching a conclusion regarding the evaluation of the enemy's situation and our situation, and of the opportunity, the Military Commission

stressed that "The situation is changing rapidly, which demands that we make the greatest possible efforts, make good use of time, overcome the difficulties and weaknesses in building our position and strength on the battlefield so that they can be more rapidly improved, promptly take advantage of the opportunity, achieve surprise, win the greatest possible victory, force the U.S. to end the war and withdraw all U.S. troops, and cause the puppet army and administration to take an important step toward disintegration and collapse."

Predicting the enemy's next plot, the Military Commission noted that although the U.S. imperialists had been heavily defeated during the spring and summer of 1971, they were not yet willing to abandon their plot of "holing onto South Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea, maintaining their neocolonialism by 'Vietnamizing the war,' gradually reducing the scale of the war, and causing us to weaken and admit defeat or enabling themselves to end the war by negotiating from a position of strength."

In order to fulfill the urgent missions set forth by the Political Bureau, the Military Commission defined our strategic intention for 1971-1972 as being, "concentrating all efforts and promoting the political and military offensives in all three areas in South Vietnam -- the principal battlefield -- and on the Indochinese battlefield as a whole."

The general guideline for the southern battlefield was to "Coordinate strong main-force blows in the jungle-and-mountains region, a strong offensive and uprisings movement in the lowlands, and a strong political struggle and armed struggle movement in the cities, thus attacking the three sources of support of the 'Vietnamization' policy, creating a new situation that would be advantageous to us in the event of a ceasefire, and create conditions for strongly advancing the revolutionary movement in the new situation."

In the North, we had to endeavor to consolidate and raise the combat readiness level of the armed forces so that they could cope with bombings by the enemy air force and navy, annihilate the small ranger and commando groups, and defeat all of the enemy's acts of aggression and adventurism. There had to be strong mobile reserve forces that are prepared to react promptly if necessary, and forces to adequately supplement the South.

The resolution of the Military Commission also set forth specific guidelines and missions for our troops coordinating in combat with the soldiers and people on the Laotian and Kampuchean battlefields in 1972, and with regard to the necessary preparatory tasks.

The May 1971 resolution of the Political Bureau and the June 1971 resolution of the Military Commission set forth a timely, correct policy regarding the strategic general offensive of 1972. The resolutions correctly evaluated our situation, the enemy's situation, our situation, and the opportunity, and accurately set forth the immediate missions and the course of action for implementing those missions.

8 December 1971: Our troops and the soldiers and people of Kampuchea defeat the "Chen La 2" operation of the Phnom Penh puppet army.



During the first half of 1971 the Saigon puppet army was struck with one painful blow after another in the Route 9-Southern Laos area, in northeastern Kampuchea, and in South Vietnam. It proved to be increasingly impotent in its role as the U.S. assault force on the Indochinese Peninsula.

Under those circumstances, the U.S. imperialists had to build up the Phnom Penh puppet army, in the hope that it could be capable of coping with the revolutionary movement in Kampuchea by itself, create conditions for withdrawing some of the puppet troops back to South Vietnam, and therefore send home additional U.S.-troops and carry out their policy of "Vietnamizing the war." The "Chen La 2" operation, which was part of that scheme, was intended to stall and challenge the Phnom Penh puppet army. That operation also had the objectives of taking the initiative in a state of passivity, occupying Route 6 from Tang Coc to Kompong Thom, encroaching on and reducing the highly populated, prosperous liberated areas, and divide the Kampuchean battlefield into many zones to facilitate "pacification" and the concentration of the population.

That was the first large operation carried out by the Phnom Penh puppet army in the U.S. policy of "Khmerizing the war." They mobilized 15 brigades, with more than 70 infantry battalions, artillery, armored vehicles, and warships, including their most elite forces -- the "Khmer Krom" -- and with the support of the U.S. and Saigon puppet air forces.

They began the operation on 20 August 1971. But it ran up against the strong, resilient resistance of our main-force troops, in coordination with the Kampuchean liberation armed forces. In 100 days and nights of combat the revolutionary armed forces, coordinating closely, spread the enemy out along a 60-kilometers-long stretch of the road (from Snul to Kompong Thom), cut them up into many segments, and surrounded, isolated, and annihilated them one after the other. After striking them with many heavy blows, during the night of 12 November and the early morning of 13 November we launched an attack to annihilate the enemy's 16th Brigade at Rum Luong. On 28 and 29 November we took nine positions on the outer perimeter from Ba Ria to Kompong Thom. By 1 December all of the enemy forces in those two towns had been annihilated or routed. With the loss of those positions, the enemy's operation was thrown into confusion and many units fled their posts. In danger of being annihilated, Lon Nol secretly went to Snul and ordered the withdrawal of his troop remnants from Route 6. On 2 December the "Chen La 2" operation of the Phnom Penh puppet army was completely defeated and ended by their fleeing from Route 6. More than 12,000 of the enemy -- one-half of the operation's forces -- were knocked out of action, five brigades and 30 battalions were annihilated or heavily damaged, and many brigade and battalion commanders were killed, wounded, or captured.

By completing defeating the "Chen La 2" operation we struck a very heavy blow against the U.S. plot to "Khmerize the war," carried out a major campaign to annihilate much of the elite manpower of the Phnom Penh puppet army, smashed the enemy's Route 6 defense line, and strongly developed our strategic initiative.

December 1971: The Plaine des Jarres and Southern Laos victories.

Following the major Route 9-Southern Laos victory at the beginning of the year and the liberation of the Bolovens Plateau in mid-year, the people's armed forces of Laos and Vietnam concluded 1971 with a big victory in the Plaine des Jarres-Long Cheng area in December 1971.

Nixon, in a hopeless position of defeat and passivity on all the Indochinese battlefields, in June 1971 once again made a very great military effort. The U.S. sent Thai mercenary troops and Vang Pao's special troops from Xam Thong-Long Cheng to take the Plaine des Jarres-Muong Sai area in hopes of occupying that important strategic area for a long time, divide the liberated areas in Laos, threaten the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, disperse the revolutionary armed forces of the three countries, and create an advantageous position for them in their war of aggression in Indochina.

They threw into the operation 33 battalions of Thai and Vang Pao troops. Taking advantage of the rainy season, by 2 July 1971 they occupied the Plaine des Jarres airfield and intended to take all of the Plaine des Jarres and advance along Route 7 to the Vietnamese-Laotian border, but were stopped by the Laotian and Vietnamese troops and could not advance past the Plaine des Jarres airfield. They used the GM's [Groupe Mobile] as tactical units and took the defensive, with six fire-support bases of the Laotian puppet army and the Thai troops and with the support of the U.S. Air Force.

The U.S. was determined to take the Plaine des Jarres to maintain a favorable political and military position in Laos, while at the same time tying down an important part of our main-force troops and creating conditions for it to carry out its program to "Vietnamize the war" in South Vietnam. Many U.S. VIP's such as Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Alexis Johnson, the Under Secretary of State, went to Long Cheng to inspect, supervise, and motivate the Vang Pao-Thai lackeys during that period.

But all of their plots, hopes, and schemes were shattered. The soldiers and people of Laos and our troops, coordinating in combat, concentrated a strong force and decided to annihilate the enemy in the Plaine des Jarres-Long Cheng area, recover the entire Plaine des Jarres-Muong Sui area, liberate Xam Thong-Long Cheng, push the enemy west of Nam Ngum, and eliminate the bandits remaining in the liberated area.

Between 18 December and 20 December, after 3 days of combat the revolutionary forces, with strong forces and correct fighting methods, smashed the enemy's entire outer defensive complex between the Plaine des Jarres and Muong Sui, consisting of the Phu Tang, Phu Ton, and Phu Keng defensive cluster. Some of the Thai troops and Vang Pao's special troops were killed and some fled in panic from the Plaine des Jarres, although the U.S. provided very strong air support.

Immediately thereafter, in the Plaine des Jarres area, our troops pursued the enemy, occupied Xam Thong-Phu Moc, and attacked Long Cheng and Buom Long. In the Muong Sui area the Pathet Lao troops pursued the enemy and liberated Muong Soui, Sala Phukun, Kieu Kacham, and Bac Kasi.

Because of the disintegration of the Vang Pao's special troops, the U.S. hastily sent additional Thai troops to Long Cheng. The force defending Long Cheng had been increased to 14 Thai battalions and 8 battalions of Vang Pao's special troops. On 5 April 1972, after 115 days of combat, we concluded the campaign.

The results were that 5,824 of the enemy were killed and 1,137 were captured or surrendered. Our friends and we wiped out 8 Thai infantry battalions, 2 Thai artillery battalions, 1 G.M., and 7 battalions of Vang Pao troops, shot down 130 airplanes, captured or destroyed 47 heavy artillery pieces, recovered the entire Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang-Muong Soui area, and also liberated the Xam Thong area with its 22 population-concentration hamlets.

That major victory in the Plaine des Jarres had an important strategic significance. It struck a very painful blow against the new U.S. strategic measure -- using the Thai troops as the hard core, alone with Vang Pao's special troops, with U.S. rear-services support, mobility, and air power, to occupy the liberated areas in Laos -- and sent the Thai-Lao puppet army into an irreversible decline. That victory also signified an important step in the maturation of the Laotian revolutionary armed forces with regard to their ability to independently fight concentrated battles, wipe out many enemy battalions, and outstandingly fulfill their campaign missions.

At the same time as the Plaine des Jarres victory, in southern Laos the revolutionary armed forces of Laos and Vietnam launched a campaign to defeat the encroaching operation of the Lao puppet army and the Thai troops in the Attapeu-Saravan and Bolovens Plateau areas. On 7 December our friends and we chased the enemy from Saravan and on 10 December liberated Tha Teng. The Laotian puppet troops and the Thai troops at Paksoong were terrified and fled to Pakse, leaving behind all of their heavy equipment. On 29 December our friends and we recovered all of the Bolovens Plateau, wiped out 4 Thai companies, and killed more than 4,000 of the enemy.

After suffering heavy defeats in the Plaine des Jarres and Bolovens Plateau at the end of 1971, the morale of the Thai troops and the Lao puppets greatly declined. The Thai troops began to desert and demand that they be returned to their country. The Thai mercenary troops revealed many weaknesses and proved to be no better than the Laotian puppet troops. Clearly, they could not serve as the hard core and as the base of support for the Lao puppet troops.

1972

First part of 1972: Military Commission of the Party Central Committee issues a resolution on the military missions for 1972 and the strategic general offensive of 1972.

Implementing the May 1971 resolution of the conference of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, which set forth the mission of "winning a decisive victory in 1972," the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee determined that "The most important mission is to concentrate our war guidance on, and strengthen the forces of, the battlefields, especially the southern battlefield." At a time when the U.S.-puppets had just suffered heavy defeats and the U.S. was in

the process of a presidential election campaign, we would resolutely strike three strategic blows against the enemy:

-- First, we had to intensify the strategic blows by the main-force troops in areas and on battlefields where we had the advantage, annihilate part of the forces of the southern puppet army, destroy part-by-part the enemy's defensive deployment, and expand the liberated area. While regarding the puppet army as the principal operational objective, we had to continue to attack and annihilate the U.S. troops.

-- Second, we had to step up our attacks and uprisings in the important lowland rural areas, combine military and political offensives with military proselyting, and promote the guerrilla warfare movement and the mass uprising movement.

-- Third, we had to promote the struggle movement of the people in the cities, combine the revolutionary struggle of the masses with exacerbating and exploiting the enemy's internal contradictions, in order to prepare to, when there is a specific opportunity, transform the struggle into a revolutionary high tide.

The Military Commission of the Party Central Committee reminded the battlefields to guide and closely coordinate the three strategic blows, closely coordinate concentrated warfare with guerrilla warfare, endeavor to build up the real strength of the revolution, build up the direct rear area in the strategic areas, with emphasis on the key maneuver areas, so that our troops can deploy and have solid support; do a good job of organizing the battlefield, concentrate guidance, and supplement the forces on the battlefield, while also preparing strategic mobile forces and ensuring that those forces can play the role of strong fists in the important areas when there is a favorable opportunity.

With regard to the Laotian and Kampuchean revolutions, the resolution of the Military Commission stated that, in the spirit of militant solidarity among the people of the three Indochinese countries it was necessary to do a very good job of assisting and coordinating with our friends in combat, in building forces, and in consolidating the liberated area, in order to work together harmoniously, attack the enemy uniformly, and create an opportunity for winning a great victory. Attention had to be paid to providing supplies and transporting them to our friends.

With regard to the North, it was necessary to increase its combat readiness.

Implementing the resolutions of the Party Central Committee and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, on 11 March 1972 the Standing Committee of the Military Commission issued a resolution on the carrying out of the 1972 strategic general offensive, focusing on the Tri-Thieu battlefield, "to annihilate large numbers of enemy troops, contribute to changing the balance of forces between ourselves and the enemy, change the war situation in South Vietnam, and advance the resistance war another step."

The Standing Committee of the Military Commission stated that "The Tri-Thien campaign will be a large-scale campaign in a very important strategic area, a combined arms campaign, and a combined military-political campaign."



The specific missions of the campaign were:

1. Annihilating many of the enemy's military forces, much of their manpower, and many of their war facilities, especially their regular troops, smash the enemy's defense line, and victoriously develop the offensive.
2. Coordinating with the mass movement in the lowlands, the cities, and the areas still controlled by the enemy, helping the masses attack and arise to destroy the enemy's control apparatus and win the right of mastery, defeat the enemy's "pacification" plan, and consolidate our three strong areas.
3. Liberating all areas we are capable of liberating and, when there is a favorable opportunity, endeavoring to expand our liberated area.
4. Drawing in and tying down an important part of the enemy's forces and coordinating closely with the other battlefields.
5. Steeling and developing our military and political forces in all regards.

Of the above missions, the foremost, decisive mission was annihilating many of the enemy's military forces, much of their manpower, and many of their war facilities, especially their regular troops; inflicting very heavy losses on their forces, causing their morale to collapse, and rapidly changing the comparison of forces to our advantage, in order to advance to the winning of complete victory. The mission of promoting the mass offensive and uprising movement was very important.

In coordination with the principal battlefield, the Central Highlands, Zone 5, and Nam Bo battlefields would also carry out medium and large campaigns and create a strategic general offensive all over the South.

On 28 March 1972 the Political Bureau met and listened to a Military Commission report on our situation, on the enemy's situation, and on preparations on battlefields. The Political Bureau agreed unanimously with the plan of the Military Commission and added a number of conclusions regarding some matters concerning the enemy, ourselves, and the organization of the guidance and command of the offensive.

February 1972: Nixon's visit to China begins the phase of the U.S. imperialists and the Chinese reactionaries brazenly allying with each other.

At the beginning of 1971, when our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation was entering a fierce period and when we were preparing to win a decisive victory, the Beijing rulers sent a diplomatic note to the U.S. (via Pakistan) inviting a U.S. delegation to China to hold high-level talks with the Chinese rulers.

After many open and secret preparations between the two sides, between 21 and 28 February 1972, the U.S. President Nixon, accompanied by Kissinger and Rodgers, visited China. Before setting out, Nixon decided to use his air force to carry out bombings by a large number of B.52's and tactical aircraft in South Vietnam and north of the demilitarized zone. They thought that that was a necessary signal to increase the effectiveness of Nixon's trip to China.

Mao Zedong and Shou Enlai organized a grand welcome for Nixon.

The result of the conference of the leaders of the U.S. and Chinese governments was the "Shanghai Communiqué," which stated that the U.S. would gradually withdraw its forces from Taiwan when the situation in the region became less tense, i.e. when the Vietnam War ended. In other words, if China wanted the U.S. to rapidly withdraw its troops from Taiwan, China would have to pressure us and force us to accept a negotiated solution, i.e. the U.S. would withdraw all of its troops from South Vietnam but the puppet army and the puppet administration would continue to exist for a long period of time.

With Nixon's trip to China the relationship between China and the U.S. officially entered a new phase. It began the counterrevolutionary strategic alliance between the reactionaries in the Beijing ruling circles and the Washington ruling circles against the Vietnamese revolution specifically and the socialist system in general. They formed an alliance and exerted pressure to force our people to abide by their settlement (in 1974 China's aid to Vietnam was only 30 percent of what it was in 1973, and in 1975 it was only 13 percent of what it was in 1973.)

However, our Party's independent, autonomous line bankrupted from the very beginning the plot of the U.S. imperialists and the Chinese reactionaries to collude with regard to Vietnam. Under the leadership of the Party, our soldiers and people smashed the traitorous pressure of the Chinese expansionists and hegemonists by means of their renowned victory of the spring of 1975. They fought until the U.S. got the hell out, until the puppets collapsed, and until the South was completely liberated.

4 April: The Party Central Committee holds its 20th Plenum.

The plenum listened to reports, held discussions, and approved a resolution regarding the mission of resisting the U.S. for national salvation and the mission of economic construction in the socialist North in 1972.

After carrying out an all-round evaluation of our people's victories in anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, the Party Central Committee unanimously concluded that "1971 will be a year in which the enemy will make great efforts, but will also be a year in which they suffer heavy defeats and we win big victories." The great victories on the battlefields of the three Indochinese countries in 1971 were important steps toward the bankruptcy of the "Vietnamization" and "Nixon Doctrine in Indochina" policy. The revolutionary forces of the people of Vietnam and the peoples of Laos and Kampuchea became increasingly large and strong.

"The sympathy, support, and assistance of the fraternal socialist countries and of the progressive people of the world have been increasingly strengthened and expanded. In general, in the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy, with regard to both position and strength, the basic development of the situation is that we are in a status of victory, initiative, advantage, and advance, while the enemy are in a status of defeat, passivity, difficulty, and decline."

The struggle between ourselves and the enemy -- militarily, politically, and diplomatically -- in a very important period. But we had favorable conditions for strongly advancing the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

The Party Central Committee set forth the mission of "With a spirit of persistently waging the resistance war until complete victory, we must mobilize all of our strength, make outstanding efforts, heroically advance, step up the resistance war, closely coordinate in combat with the fraternal soldiers and people of Laos and with the fraternal soldiers and people of Kampuchea, defeat the U.S. 'Vietnamization' policy, defeat the 'Nixon Doctrine,' and win an even greater victory for the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

In order to meet the increasingly greater requirements of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation, and continue to promote the great undertaking of socialist construction in the North, the Plenum made specific decisions regarding the direction and missions of the 1972 state plan and preparations for 1973. Of those missions, the most outstanding was "meeting as promptly and as fully as possible the requirements for manpower and materiel to supply to the front. Strengthening our national defense forces, and being prepared to smash the enemy's acts of military adventurism carried out by their air force, commandos, or infantry against the socialist North."

The resounding victories on the battlefield in 1972 proved that the assessment of the Party Central Committee and the direction and missions it set forth were very correct. The U.S. bandits were unable to stop the strong attacks and continuous, widespread uprisings of our soldiers and people in the South, and could not hold back their increasingly rapid decline on the path to complete defeat.

30 March: The 1972 strategic offensive on the southern battlefield. The Tri-Thien campaign (liberation of Quang Tri Province.)

At the beginning of spring, 1972, the U.S.-puppets knew that we would launch a major attack, but they could not predict the time, the main thrust, the scale, or the intensity of our attack. They believed that the main attack of our main-force units would be Cong Tum, that the secondary attacks would be in the Route 9 area and in eastern Nam Bo, and that the attack would take place during Tet Nham Ty [1972].

Catching the enemy off-guard because the time they predicted had passed and they had been waiting for a long time, at noon on 30 March 1972 our strategic offensive on the Tri-Thien battlefield began. We launched a direct attack against the enemy's heavily fortified outer defensive line, wiped out the enemy's regimental base camps, forced the surrender of a regiment, inflicted heavy losses on many other regiments, shattered the Route 9 defense line, and completely liberated the districts of Gio Linh and Cam Lo. With that victory, we were able to take a staging area in north and west Quang Tri, move up close to and directly threaten the Dong Ha-Ai Tu- Quang Tri-La Vang, and increase our pressure west of Hue.

Then, on 5 April, we smashed the enemy's border defense line in eastern Nam Bo, wiped out three understrength enemy infantry regiments and two understrength armored regiments, and liberated the provinces of Loc Ninh, Bu Dop, and Thien Ngo. Thus we were able to take a staging area on the eastern Nam Bo border, cut Route 13, and surround and attack the city of Loc An.

In the Central Highlands, we attacked the enemy's defense line west of the Po Co River, inflicted heavy losses on the 2nd Airborne Brigade, and strongly threatened the northern Cong Tum area.

In the Military Region 5 and Nam Bo lowlands we occupied a number of staging areas, such as northern Quang Nam, northern Binh Dinh (Military Region 5), Dong Thap Muoi (Military Region 8), and U Minh Thuong (Military Region 9).

The enemy were taken by surprise by our strong offensive blows, suffered heavy losses, and put up a confused resistance. They had to abandon their outer lines and withdraw to their inner lines, brought up mobile forces from the rear, and withdrew into large enclaves in the areas attacked by our main-force units.

Developing our victory on the Quang Tri front, on 27 April we launched the second wave of attacks against the Dong Ha-Ai Tu-La Vang defensive zone, in coordination with the offensives and uprisings in the Trieu Phong and Hai Lang lowlands and the offensive by main-force units in the Route 12 area west of Hue. In 5 days of fighting we wiped out the Dong Ha-Ai Tu enclave, liberated all of Quang Tri Province and the Dong Thanh area, and directly threatened Thua Thien Province and Hue.

On the Central Highlands front, on 24 April we attacked and annihilated the enemy at Dac To-Tan Canh, liberated northern Cong Tum Province, and directly threatened Cong Tum City.

In Nam Bo, after advancing along Route 22 and attacking the Xa Mat- Thieu Ngon line, we attacked the communications center on Mt. Ba Den. On Route 13, we liberated a vast area with a population of 30,000 in Loc Ninh District, took Loc Ninh City, and threatened the area northwest of Saigon. In the Mekong Delta, after attacking many district capitals and subsectors, and wiping out or inflicting heavy losses on many enemy units, we motivated the people to arise and master many rural areas and recovered the U Minh liberated area and the Dong Thap base area.

In Military Region 5, we attacked a large number of enemy bases and subsectors, and liberated the Hoai Nhon, Bong Son, and Hiep Duc district capitals, and the town of Tam Quan.

In May and June 1972 we also launched attacks on the lines south of the My Chanh River and west of the Huong River (Tri-Thien), in the outskirts of and inside Cong Tum City (Central Highlands), and the city of An Loc (eastern Nam Bo).

By June 1972, after nearly 3 months of fighting, we had won a great victory in annihilating the enemy and liberating land: in the South as a whole we annihilated about 200,000 of the enemy, wiped out 2 divisions, 9 regiments, and 38 battalions, inflicted heavy losses on 1 division, 10 regiments, and 31 infantry battalions, wiped out 12 armored regiments and 17 artillery battalions, liberated all of Quang Tri Province, most of Cong Tum Province, the northern part of Binh Dinh Province, and a large, integrated area in eastern Nam Bo (in Tay Ninh, Binh Long, and Phuoc Long provinces), occupied many important areas in the lowlands of Military Region 5 (Quang Da, Quang Nam, and Quang Ngai) and in the Mekong Delta (Dong Thap Muoi, the area north and south of Route 4, U Minh, Ca Mau, etc.), and liberated and



gained control of more than 1 million people. Our main-force units broke up the enemy's strongest defensive zones and took and held mobile areas in the jungle-and-mountains area, the border area, and a number of important areas in the lowlands.

In that test of strength, it is clear that the puppet army, which the Nixon clique had gone all-out to build up in accordance with the "Vietnamization" formula, and which had become weaker after its adventures in Kampuchea and in the Route 9-Southern Laos area, was now in danger of collapsing. We were able to create a new situation on the southern battlefield, brought about an important change in the comparison of forces that was to our advantage, and created a very favorable revolutionary situation.

The very great victory of the 1972 strategic offensive, along with the victory of defeating their second war of destruction in the North, especially the glorious victory over their strategic air raids on Hanoi and Hai Phong at the end of 1972, and our victory on the diplomatic front, contributed to the essential smashing of the U.S. imperialists' "Vietnamization" strategy. They had to sign a agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam, and unilaterally withdraw their troops.

6 April: Soldiers and people of the North Wage a victorious people's war against the U.S. imperialists' second war of destruction.

The 1972 strategic offensive carried out by our soldiers and people in the South placed the puppet army in a perilous situation. The Nixon administration had to recklessly carry out a strategic policy that was beyond the framework of the "Vietnamization" strategy, i.e. it had to "re-Americanize" the war. They mobilized very intensive air and naval support for the puppet army's counterattacks and brought the system of advisers back into action at the regimental level to take direct command of the fighting.

In the North, the Nixon administration carried out an extremely serious act of adventurism, despite the protests of world opinion and the progressive U.S. people. On 6 April Nixon decided to mobilize large air force and naval forces to participate in the fighting in the South and resume the attacks against the North, purportedly in retaliation for our attacks in the South. On 9 May Nixon also ordered a blockade of the ports and territorial waters of the North, the intensified bombing of our roads and railroads, and the bombing of all of our economic and national defense installations. The enemy's plot was to strangle the North and cut our country off from the outside aid and cut off the North's aid for the South. They hoped that in a brief period of only 2 or 3 months we would be paralyzed and be forced to negotiate with them from a position of weakness. Nixon proved to be extremely obstinate and reckless, and did things Johnson never dared to do. He cynically declared that "I would rather lose the presidential election than be defeated in the war."

In the North our people waged a people's war against the second war of destruction, which was more fierce, and on a larger scale, than the previous one.

The U.S. imperialists mobilized the greatest naval and air forces ever, made up of all types of modern aircraft (F.4, F.111, B.52G, B52.H), to attack both parts of

our country. They used 1,177 U.S. tactical aircraft (1,400 at the greatest point), which was 40 percent of the U.S. tactical air force, and 193 B.52's -- 45 percent of all U.S. B.52's. They mobilized 14 warships, which amounted to three-fourths of the 7th Fleet, and 5 or 6 aircraft carriers, 50 percent of the U.S. aircraft carriers. (Not including the Saigon puppet air force, the U.S. aircraft used in Vietnam equalled the combined total of the three strongest West European air forces: England, 600 aircraft; France, 475 aircraft, and West Germany, 500 aircraft, a total of 1,575 aircraft.)

During the second quarter of 1972 sent 1,500 sorties against the North, including 270 B.52 sorties. During the third quarter of 1972, there were 22,000 sorties, including 910 B.52 sorties; and during the fourth quarter of 1972, there were more than 17,000 sorties, including more than 2,100 B.52 sorties.

In June 1972 the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee met and concluded that "The U.S. imperialists have brazenly resumed their war of destruction in the North of our country and are carrying out large-scale air and naval attacks. They are plotting to halt our offensive and uprisings in order to limit the victory of our soldiers and people, save the 'Vietnamization' strategy, and prevent the situation on the southern battlefield from worsening. The Nixon clique is going all-out to carry out that plot, in part because of their belligerent, obstinate nature and in part because the international situation is undergoing new, complicated changes. Our people must always be stalwart, heighten their vigilance, positively keep up their guard, and continue to fight and win under all circumstances. Our determination will contribute importantly to encouraging the revolutionary forces and the world movement to intensify their struggle against the U.S. imperialist aggressors and force them to pull back."

When the war was once again expanded to both parts of the country, the soldiers and people of the North, under the leadership of the Party, calmly and rapidly changed over all activities to a wartime footing. Our people's armed forces resolutely retaliated against the enemy air force and navy. The people's air-defense work was carried out urgently, especially evacuation and dispersion in the municipalities, cities, and key communications zones. With a spirit of brave, stubborn combat, and with many resourceful, skilled fighting methods, in a period of only 1 month -- between 6 April and 8 May -- we shot down 90 enemy airplanes, set afire or damaged more than 20 enemy warships, and captured a number of enemy pilots, while also keeping the strategic routes open in order to aid the front. In the first feat of arms in Quang Binh-Vinh Linh, on 6 April, we shot down 10 U.S. airplanes, and on 19 April we sent fighter planes to damage an enemy destroyer off the coast of Quang Binh.

In order to defeat the enemy's plot to blockade our coast and strangle the North, we had very strong determination, and shifted most of our import volume from the sea to railroads and roads, while also developing initiatives, detecting and destroying bombs and mines, maintaining maritime transportation on appropriate scales, and urgently building the pipeline systems. Thanks to a whole series of resolute, positive, and creative measures on the communications and transportation front, in 1972 the volume of cargo transported to the battlefields increased 1.7 times over 1971, and the volume to the distant battlefields increased by 1.4 times. At the end of August 1972 the U.S. intelligence organ had to report to Nixon that "despite

very fierce bombing, the sending of people and equipment to South Vietnam has not been appreciably reduced."

After more than 7 months of combat, by December 1972, the soldiers and people of the North had shot down more than 600 U.S. airplanes, including the 4,000th airplane shot down in the North, 20 B.52's, and 5 F.111's captured many pilots, and sunk or set afire nearly 100 U.S. warships.

Because of his heavy defeats in both the South and the North, on 22 October 1972 Nixon had to order a halt to the bombings and shellings north of the 20th Parallel. That act was also intended to win over public opinion at home and abroad and help himself in the presidential election. But at the same time the U.S. used its air force and navy to concentrate on stopping our communications and transportation South of the 20th Parallel. The volume of bombs and shells the enemy used to attack that small area was not smaller than the volume of bombs and shells they had used to attack the entire North. Every day they sent out 250-300 fighter-bomber sorties and 18 to 27 B.52 sorties.

Our air-defense forces, with a strong spirit of vigilance, meticulous combat organization measures, and tight guidance, continued to defeat the enemy in both combat and ensuring communications and transportation. In 56 days and nights, from 23 October to 17 December, we shot down 40 enemy airplanes. Especially, during the night of 22 November air-defense missile troops in Nghe An shot down 2 B.52's and gained much valuable experience in shooting down of B.52's when they were taking strong countermeasures. With regard to transportation, despite fierce interdiction by the enemy the volume of cargo reaching the main battlefields attained the plan norm.

Immediately after the enemy halted their bombing north of the 20th Parallel, the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission reminded our soldiers and people to always be on guard against the enemy. The Military Commission concluded that "The enemy will concentrate on fiercely bombing the area south of Thanh Hoa, and there is a strong possibility they will resume the bombing of the North. Therefore, while continuing to guide the fighting to protect our supply lines to the South, we must maintain our vigilance and always be prepared to fight in the North in order to put up an effective resistance when the enemy resume their bombing."

In view of the enemy's stalling tactics and crooked dealings at the Paris Conference, on 27 November 1972 the High Command ordered the armed forces to step up their preparations for combat and also observed that "There is a strong possibility that the enemy will resume their attacks in all parts of the North at a more intense level, including the use of B.52's to violently bomb Hanoi and Hai Phong," and that therefore "the mission of the air defense-air force armed forces branch is to concentrate all capabilities on annihilating B.52's

Carrying out the directive of the Party Central Committee and the order of the High Command, our air-defense forces stepped up their preparations and urgently deploy forces to defend the key objectives, especially Hanoi. In the municipalities and cities we urgently supervised evacuation and dispersion, the strengthening of shelters, and the organization of observation and warning. By 4 December 1972



our soldiers and people north of the 20th Parallel had essentially completed preparations and were ready to cope with the enemy if they resumed the bombing. The air-defense forces were ordered to maintain a high degree of combat-readiness.

Just as we had predicted, after he was reelected to the presidency (8 November 1972, Nixon and his clique obstinately began to threaten, obstructed proceedings, and caused the talks to be broken off. During the night of 18 December the U.S. imperialists brazenly launched the largest strategic air raids against the North of our country in "Operation Linebacker II." They concentrated a large number of airplanes, used B.52's as the main assault force, and attacked Hanoi, Hai Phong, and a number of other areas, in order to:

- Devastate a number of populated areas, especially in Hanoi and Hai Phong, in hopes of creating confusion among the people, bringing pressure to bear to force our people to weaken a number of provisions of the draft agreement and have to return to the Paris Conference in a position of weakness.

- Destroying our economic and national defense potential in order to cut off at the source of supply for the front and to disrupt our plan to prepare for future large-scale fighting in the South.

- Inflict manpower and material losses on us to threaten the countries which were struggling against the U.S. imperialists and also to cause us to lose much time in overcoming the aftereffects after the war had ended, and therefore be unable to continue the resistance war in the South. Therefore, they would ensure that the puppet army and administration would have a rather stable period in which to strengthen their forces.

The enemy's plot was very cunning and their actions were very barbarous. For 12 straight days and nights they launched 663 B.52 sorties and 3,884 sorties by fighter-bombers, and continually attacked Hanoi, Hai Phong, and Thai Nguyen, the key lines of communication, and the large supply depots at Kep and Dong Mo on Route 1 north. They haphazardly bombed hospitals, housing areas, schools, bus stations, and railroad stations, and inflicted many losses on our people (2,368 dead, 3,526 wounded). In the Hanoi area alone the enemy concentrated 444 B.52 sorties, 66 percent of the total number of B.52 sorties, and more than 1,000 fighter-bomber sorties, 27 percent of such sorties during the bombing campaign.

Our soldiers and people, especially those in Hanoi, deservingly punished the enemy for their escalated, barbarous attacks. Because we had made very good preparations, in the very first battle our air-defense forces shot down the enemy's B.52 bombers. Although they sought all ways to deceive us and used countermeasures, organized tight formations, coordinated many types of airplanes which operated at both high altitudes and low altitudes, attacked at night and then attacked all the next day, and used many types of bombs and missiles, including "smart bombs," they still suffered a disastrous defeat. During the 12 days and nights of the raids, 81 enemy airplanes were shot down, and 44 pilots were captured. Of the planes shot down, 34 were "trump card" B.52's and 5 were F.111 variable-wing "all-weather penetrators." During those days of fierce challenge, our air-defense forces achieved outstanding accomplishments. Many localities achieved great feats of arms, such as Hanoi, which shot down 30 U.S. planes.



Coordinating with the fighting against the enemy airplanes, our people in the capital and in the other cities calmly and actively carried out evacuation and dispersion according to plan, thus reducing losses to people and property.

Th 12 days and nights of combat and victory in the skies of the north, especially the skies over the capital, at the end of 1972 were the air-defense campaign which annihilated the greatest numbers of the enemy's modern strategic airplanes, and attained the greatest strategic effectiveness, in the fight to defend the North and in our people's enterprise of resisting the U.S. for national salvation. It was the first campaign in the world that annihilated large numbers of the enemy's B.52 bombers and struck the heaviest annihilating blow against the U.S. strategic air force in the history of its development and aggression.

We prevented the raids from attaining their strategic goal. General Eisler, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, had to admit that "We believe that North Vietnam has developed the most experienced air-defense forces in the world. Clearly, they are more experienced than any other country in launching SAM missiles to shoot down airplanes. They are also more experienced than any other military force in the use of ground radar," and that "in all but a few cases, our airplanes were shot down because the enemy caught them completely by surprise." A research group at Cornell University in the U.S. concluded that "The victory of the Vietnamese people is an unparalleled example of the victory of human intelligence over machines."

In the second war of destruction, Nixon concentrated very large forces, escalated rapidly, and attacked us fiercely by means of very cunning schemes. But, once again, they were heavily defeated. Above all, we defeated the enemy's plot to cut off the North's aid to the South, which was the foremost objective of the U.S. imperialists in their war of destruction against the North. We also defeated their plot to destroy the North's economic and national defense potential, to paralyze the North, and to shake our will and weaken our prestige.

The great victory of our soldiers and people in defeating the second war of destruction, and particularly their glorious victory in defeating the U.S. imperialists' strategic air raids, contributed importantly to the common victory, and had the effect of squashing Nixon's desire to "negotiate from a position of strength" and forcing the U.S. imperialists to deescalate, stop their bombing and shelling north of the 20th Parallel after 30 December 1972, and return to the Paris Conference in a position of weakness and isolation. During that session Kissinger himself had to blust out to our delegates, "You are not only heroic but are also intelligent."

27 July: The Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in Solidarity With the Vietnamese People meets in Paris.

The barbarous war crimes of the U.S. imperialists gave rise to strong, broad waves of world support for Vietnam's resistance to U.S. imperialist aggression. All of progressive mankind, including progressive Americans, angrily condemned the Nixon administration and resolutely demanded that it end the war of aggression, unconditionally withdraw all of its troops back to the U.S., and negotiate seriously on the basis of our reasonable, rational solution.

Against that background, on 27 July 1972 the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties in Solidarity with the Vietnamese People met in Paris. Participating in the conference were 27 delegations, including delegations from the Eastern Europe socialist countries and delegations representing the communist and workers' parties in Western Europe and Northern Europe.

In his speech opening the conference, Georges Marchais General Secretary of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, introduced the heroic struggle and great victories of the Vietnamese people and denounced the extremely barbarous war crimes of the U.S. aggressors. Victoriously concluding its discussions, the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties approved an important declaration regarding Vietnam.

The declaration severely condemned the Nixon administration for continuing to commit aggression in South Vietnam and for escalating its war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and committing extremely barbarous crimes against the people in both parts of our country, while also intensifying the war against the people of Laos and Kampuchea. The declaration stressed that "Today, no mission is more noble or urgent than supporting the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea and denouncing the U.S. war crimes in Indochina."

The declaration resolutely supported the just, rational recommendation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and stated that "The communist and workers' parties of Europe demand that the U.S. government immediately end its bombing and all other acts of war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, abandon its blockade of the ports of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, stop its genocide, without delay and unconditionally withdraw the U.S. troops and U.S. weapons from South Vietnam and all of Indochina, abandon its support for Thieu, and end all intervention in the internal affairs of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea." Finally, the declaration appealed for communists, the working class, and the democratic and peace forces all over Europe to strengthen their solidarity with and support for the struggle for independence and freedom of the people of Vietnam and Indochina."

The Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties and its declaration were outstanding events in the movement of the world's workers and people for solidarity with the Vietnamese people, and were important, necessary, and timely acts of support for the Vietnamese people in their opposition to the escalation by the U.S. imperialists. By means of the conference's declaration, the communist and workers' parties of Europe expressed the resolute support of the communists, the working class, and the socialist countries of Europe, and of the progressive people all over Europe, for the just cause and correct stand of our people in their anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation. The convening of the conference, its declaration, and the ardent speeches by the leaders of the fraternal parties at the conference served to strongly inspire our soldiers and people to enthusiastically rush forward to completely defeat the U.S. aggressors.

10 August 1972: Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Nonaligned Nations meeting in Georgetown recognizes the legal status of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

In August 1972 the people of the three Indochinese countries receive the great support and encouragement of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Nonaligned Nations, which met in Georgetown, the capital of the Republic of Guyana, near the U.S. At that conference, representatives of 59 nonaligned countries, reflecting the will of nearly half the nations of the world, with a total population of more than 1 billion, concentrated on discussing and approving many resolutions regarding opposition to old-style and new-style colonialism, opposition to the imperialists' wars of aggression, and peace and national independence.

The conference solemnly recognized the legal status of the representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and the representative of the Government of the Kampuchean National Solidarity Kingdom in the family of nonaligned countries, which was opposed to imperialism and in favor of defending national independence and peace, and refused to recognize the representatives of the Saigon puppet regime and the Phnom Penh puppet regime, which were lackeys of the U.S.

The recognition by the Georgetown Conference of the legal status of the representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the representative of the Government of the Kampuchean National Solidarity Kingdom in the family of nonaligned nations was an important political victory of the Vietnamese people and the people of the three Indochinese countries. That victory of the national, democratic, and peace forces contributed to the collapse of the "Nixon Doctrine" and was also a strong blow against great-nation expansionism and big-nation hegemonism of Beijing, which gave no consideration to the vital interests of the other countries. It amounted to strong, precious support for us and inspired the people of the three Indochinese countries to persist in and promote the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation until complete victory was won.

27 January 1972: Paris Agreement on Vietnam signed.

By October 1972, because of the obstinacy of the U.S. the peace talks regarding Vietnam had gone on 4 years without any progress being made. In order to enable the talks to quickly produce results, during the separate meeting on 8 October 1972 our side made a very important move by submitting a draft "agreement to end the war and restore peace in Vietnam" and recommended that the agreement be signed immediately.

Our initiative put the prolonged talks on the right track. The U.S. Government had to admit that the draft agreement submitted by our side was a truly important and very basic document which made possible a quick solution.

After many days of negotiation, on 17 October 1972 we and the U.S. agreed on nearly all of the problems, on the basis of our draft agreement. In a message sent to our Premier on 20 October 1972 and 22 October 1972, the U.S. President praised our good will, confirmed that the agreement could be regarded as complete, and expressed satisfaction over our Government's explanations.

But then the U.S. deliberately held things up. After twice requesting that the timetable for signing the agreement, on 23 October the U.S. side, making the excuse of difficulties in Saigon, demanded that the talks continue and said nothing about living up to its pledges.

On 26 October 1972 we issued a "Declaration of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on the present situation of the Vietnam peace talks." The declaration reviewed the developments during the talks and the main points of the agreement about which agreement had been reached, and exposed the lack of seriousness and good will on the part of the U.S., which had created a very serious situation and threatened the restoration of peace in Vietnam.

Having been defeated in both South Vietnam and North Vietnam, and having suffered an especially heavy defeat in their strategic air raids against North Vietnam during the last 12 days of 1972, the belligerent U.S. imperialists were subjected to the very strong pressure by the American people and the world's people, who demanded that they immediately end their bombing and sign the peace agreement. On 30 December 1972 the Nixon administration had to announce a return to the situation prior to 18 December 1972. In other words, it had to cease the bombing and shelling north of the 20th Parallel, beginning at 0700 on 30 December 1972, so that the Paris Conference could resume.

The private meetings between comrade Le Duc Tho and Kissinger were resumed on 8 January 1973. From a position of overwhelming strength we persistently struggled to maintain the basic contents of the draft agreement agreed to on 20 October 1972.

This time, Kissinger had to lower his voice. The Nixon-Kissinger clique had to admit the painful truth that in South Vietnam there were two areas of control, two administrations, two armies, and three political forces. On 12 and 13 January 1973 essential agreement was reached on the draft agreement. On 15 January 1973 the U.S. government had to announce the "cessation of all offensive military actions, including bombing, shelling, and mining," in the North of our country.

On 23 January 1973 the Agreement was signed by comrade Le Duc Tho and Kissinger. On 27 January 1973 the Agreement was officially signed by the Foreign Minister of the parties participating in the Paris Conference. The Agreement went into effect on 28 January 1973.

The contents of the Agreement met all four basic demands that we had made in the past:

- The U.S. had to respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Vietnam.

- The U.S. had to withdraw all U.S. and vassal troops, dismantle the U.S. military bases, and pledge not to continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Vietnam, so that the people of South Vietnam can determine their own political future.

- The U.S. imperialists and the Saigon administration had to recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government as one of the "two South Vietnamese" sides, and had to acknowledge the fact that in South Vietnam there were two administrations, two armies, and two areas of control.



-- The U.S had to pay war reparations.

What was most painful to the U.S. imperialists was that they had to acknowledge the fact that North Vietnamese would not withdraw from the South, and acknowledge the existence and legal status of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam.

On 2 March 1973, 12 delegations of the governments of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Republic of South Vietnam, the Soviet Union, the U.S., England, France, and China, the Saigon puppet administration, and the four countries in the International Commission for Control and Supervision held an international conference on Vietnam. The conference approved an Act which acknowledged the agreement and the protocols regarding Vietnam and guaranteed that they would be strictly and fully carried out. That Act signified a setback for the U.S., for not only the U.S. but the whole world recognized the existence of a revolutionary government in South Vietnam, and the end of the war in Vietnam was a demand not only of Vietnam but of the whole world. Never before had there been signed a document regarding the basic national rights of a nation's people which had been attentively observed by the nations and people of the world, as was the Paris Agreement on ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam. It was also the result of the longest negotiations in this century, negotiations which lasted 4 years and 9 months and included 202 open sessions and 24 private meetings.

The signing of the Paris Agreement was a brilliant victory the patriotic struggle of the people and soldiers of the South and the North of our country. Our people's national salvation enterprise -- full of hardship and sacrifice, but extremely glorious -- achieved basic results of broad, profound significance.

With the victory of the Paris Agreement on Vietnam, the revolution in the South of our country entered a new phase; a new situation appeared in the South, an extremely important change with regard to the comparison of forces; the position and strength of the revolution were much greater than the position and strength of the clique of traitorous lackeys. That situation created very favorable conditions for our people in the South to continue to advance to completing the national democratic revolution.

The victory of the signing of the Paris Agreement also created extremely favorable conditions for the North. Building on its heroic revolutionary tradition, under peacetime conditions, and with the promoting of socialist construction, the North would be able to do an even better job of fulfilling its historic mission as the great rear area of the great front line.

## Chapter V

From 27 January 1973 to 30 April 1975

Crating the Position and Strength to Advance to the Completion of the People's Democratic National Revolution, the Liberation of the South, and the Victorious Conclusion of Our People's Anti-U.S. Resistance War for National Salvation With the General Offensive and Uprising of the Spring of 1975.

1973

29 March: Our country is rid of aggressor troops. The headquarters of the U.S. expeditionary army must fold its flag. The last U.S. and vassal troops withdraw from South Vietnam.

To wage their war of aggression, at the highest point the U.S. imperialists had in the South 535,000 U.S. troops, who accounted for 68 percent of the infantry, 60 percent of the Marines, 32 percent of the tactical air force, and 50 percent of the strategic air force, of the U.S. Counting troops who were stationed outside the country but who participated in the war in Vietnam, they used more than 800,000 U.S. troops, and in the course of the war 6 million U.S. troops served in Vietnam. Furthermore, the U.S. brought troops of five vassal countries to the South to help them serve as the backbone for more than 1 million puppet troops. At the highest point the vassal troops included 50,000 South Koreans, 13,000 Thai, 7,000 Australians, 2,000 Filipinos, and 600 New Zealanders.

The glorious victory of our soldiers and people forced the U.S. imperialists to unilaterally withdraw their troops, and those of their vassals, from our country.

On 15 March 1973 the headquarters of the U.S. ground forces in Vietnam concluded a flag-folding ceremony "with a prayer for the mistakes the U.S. may (!) have committed" (AFP, 15 April 1973).

On 29 March 1973 the headquarters of the U.S. expeditionary army held a flag-folding ceremony after which Weyand, commander-in-chief of U.S. troops in South Vietnam, joined the last 2,501 U.S. troops to silently leave Tan Son Nhat airfield. The U.S. units left under the supervision of Vietnam People's Army Officers serving in the Four-Party Joint Military Commission.

More than 18 years previously U.S. troops came to South Vietnam to wage an declared war, but now, having been defeated and "battered and bruised," they had to silently retreat. As far as the U.S. Army was concerned it was "a war without brilliant victories, one which did not produce national heroes," but was "the greatest disaster in the history of the U.S. Army" (Newsweek, 5 February 1973). From the date of the first U.S. death, on 22 December 1961, to 30 April 1975, according to official U.S. statistics (although far from the truth), 56,245 Americans were killed, 303,640 were wounded, and 1,300 were missing. Twelve U.S. generals were killed, and 8 others wounded, on Vietnam battlefields.

When the U.S. expeditionary army packed up to leave, the vassal troops had to go along with them. On 29 March 1973 the last South Korean and Filipino soldiers left our country. On the South Vietnam battlefield the U.S. imperialists wanted to use the troops of U.S. vassals not only because they were "cheap" but also to reduce their military difficulties and political isolation. However, that lackey army could not save the U.S. from defeat, and what we witnessed was the bankruptcy of the U.S. policy of "using Asians to fight Asians" and the weakening of the U.S.

The U.S. committed aggression a total of 18 years and 10 months, from 1 June 1954, when the U.S. military delegation commanded by the CIA agent Col. Lansdale began to

fulfill its mission of "waging an unconventional war in South Vietnam" and "waging a secret war in North Vietnam," to 29 March 1973, and that is not counting prior to that, when the U.S. helped France wage war against us. Between 29 March 1973 and 30 April 1975 continued to command and aid the Saigon puppet army, to the day it completely collapsed. From its initial involvement to the time when it had to completely withdraw from our country, Vietnam was the longest and largest war of aggression, and also the worst defeat, in the 200-year history of the U.S. Army.

With the withdrawal of the U.S. expeditionary troops and the troops of the U.S. vassals from South Vietnam there were no aggressor troops in our country for the first time in 115 years, since 1858, when the French colonialists began to commit aggression against our country. The comparison of forces on the southern battlefield was changing increasingly in our favor. The Saigon puppet army and administration became increasingly confused and unconfident. That was an extremely favorable condition for us to win complete victory.

21 February: The Laotian patriotic forces win a major victory: the signing of the "Agreement to Restore Peace and Achieve National Conciliation" in Laos.

The defeats of the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys in all there Indochinese countries, especially on the Vietnam battlefield, strongly affected the political-military situation in Laos. Because of the continuous victories of the revolutionary forces in Laos between 1970 and 1972, especially the Plaine des Jarres-Xieng Khoang, Attapeu-Saravan-Bolovens Plateau, and Route 9 victories, the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys in Laos were forced to deescalate the war and negotiate with the Laotian revolutionary forces.

In October 1972 negotiations began in Vientiane between a delegation of Laotian patriotic forces representing the Laotian Patriotic Front and the Laotian patriotic neutralist forces on the one hand and a delegation representing the Vientiane government on the other hand.

After 5 months of negotiating, because of the correct stand, persistent attitude, and good will of the delegation of the patriotic forces, and its all-out efforts to reach a peaceful solution to the question of Laos, on 21 February 1973 the two sides signed the "Agreement to Restore Peace and Achieve National Conciliation in Laos" in Vientiane.

The Agreement recognized the basic rights of the Laotian people: independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and the right of self-determination of the Laotian people; ended all military acts and aggression by the U.S. and its Thai lackeys in Laos; and called for the withdrawal from Laos of all U.S. and Thai troops. It acknowledged the actual situation in Laos -- that there were two areas temporarily controlled by the two sides -- and that the internal affairs of Laos would have to be resolved in a spirit of national conciliation and in accordance with the principle of equality, with neither party coercing or taking over the other party. The Agreement also declared that the declaration on Laotian neutrality of 9 July 1961 and the 1962 Geneva Agreements on Laos were the proper bases of the independent, peaceful, and neutral Laotian foreign policy, and that

therefore the relevant parties in Laos, and the governments of the U.S., Thailand, and the other countries had to fully respect and strictly implement the Agreement. The Agreement called for the achievement of national conciliation, the observance of democratic rights, and the holding of truly free and democratic elections to elect a National Assembly and an official national coalition government in Laos.

Although the U.S. imperialists had to take a step backward, they had not abandoned their intention of maintaining their new policy in Laos. They encouraged the extremely reactionary Sanakikone lackey clique to impede and sabotage the signing of the protocol on which the two sides had reached agreement, continually violate the ceasefire, continually launch attacks against the patriotic forces, and carry out a reactionary coup d'etat on 20 August 1973. But that coup was unsuccessful.

The patriotic forces defeated all acts of sabotage by the reactionaries and persistently struggled to achieve peace and national conciliation. Therefore, on 14 September 1973, in Vientiane, the representatives of the patriotic forces and the Vientiane government signed the Protocol of the "Agreement to Restore Peace and Achieve National Conciliation in Laos" in order to resolve the specific political and military problems remaining after the signing of the Agreement on 21 February 1973.

Following the signing of the "Agreement to End the War and Restore Peace in Vietnam," the signing of the "Agreement to Restore Peace and Achieve National Conciliation in Laos" signified a basic defeat for the "Laoization" policy and "intensified special war" strategy of the U.S. imperialists. It was an important step toward the bankruptcy of the policy of "using Indochinese to fight Indochinese and using Asians to fight Asians" of the "Nixon Doctrine" in Laos. Along with the recently won victory of the Vietnamese people, that great victory of the Laotian people contributed importantly to expelling the aggressive imperialist powers from the Indochinese Peninsula.

The signing of the Agreement, the revolutionary struggle of the heroic Laotian people was a major turning point. On the basis of the comparison of forces increasingly favoring the Laotian revolution, the Agreement provided the strong preconditions for the struggle of the Laotian people to advance to the winning of complete victory.

13 October: The Party Central Committee holds its 21st Plenum, delineates the line toward completing the liberation of the South.

Beginning in March 1973 the Political Bureau, in addition to guiding the battlefields and guiding the strengthening of our forces, urgently began preparations for the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee, in order to determine the direction and policies with regard to fulfilling the people's democratic national revolution, liberating the South, and unifying the homeland.

In April 1973 comrade Le Duan, General Secretary of the Party Central Committee, expressed to the Political Bureau extremely important opinions in preparation for the Party Central Committee Plenum to discuss the revolutionary situation and missions in the new phase and the completion of the people's democratic national revolution in the South. On the basis of evaluating our victories and the enemy's



defeats during the 18 years of the anti-U.S. resistance war, comrade Le Duan concluded that the U.S. imperialists had been defeated, and had withdrawn 'never to return.' "At present, the U.S. imperialists want to achieve a stand-off in Southeast Asia and in Vietnam, and want to transform the Saigon administration from a lackey administration into a dependent administration. In the North, the U.S. intends to come in economically in order to exert influence.

In June 1973 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee issued a resolution on "The important new situation and missions," analyzed the developments in the situation since the Paris Agreement, predicted possible developments in the situation, and set forth the military guidelines and missions, and the major policies, with regard to the North and the South.

Also in June 1973 the Political Bureau met with the Party committee secretaries and commanders of the battlefields to discuss the drafting of the Political Bureau's report to the Party Central Committee. Embued with the spirit of that Political Bureau meeting, the Central Office, South Vietnam [COSVN] held its 12th conference in September 1973, and the Standing Committee of the Interzone Party Committee and the Military Region 5 Party Committee met in July and August 1973 to promptly bring about a strong transformation in the situation.

In October 1973 the whole Party Central Committee held its 21st Plenum and issued a resolution on "The great victory of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation and the revolutionary missions in the South in the new phase." Our Party Central Committee listened to a report by the Central Committee and reviewed 18 victorious years of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation and isolated the laws for winning victory -- the most decisive factors among which were always maintaining, consolidating, and strengthening the Party's leadership; the strategic offensive concept, knowing how to resolutely attack while knowing how to win step-by-step victories, gradually pushing back and defeating the enemy, and consolidating the revolutionary battlefield in order to win complete victory; the method of revolutionary violence, based on political and military forces and achieved by means of the forms of military struggle, political struggle, and diplomatic struggle, combined in a very active and flexible manner; combining mass uprisings with revolutionary warfare, uprisings with attacks, and attacks with uprisings; fighting the enemy in all three strategic areas by means of three spearheads, combining the three types of troops, combining guerrilla warfare with conventional warfare, combining large battles, medium battles, and small battles, and achieving mastery in order to annihilate the enemy and annihilating the enemy in order to achieve mastery; fighting for a long period of time, becoming increasingly stronger as we fight, and fighting while building and developing our forces; and attacking the enemy from a small scale to a large scale and from a low level to a high level. All of those forms and measures constitute a unified whole, are organically interrelated to one another, and create the combined strategy and military art of Vietnamese people's war.

Our Party always held high two banners -- the banner of independence and the banner of nationalism and socialism -- and closely combined the revolutionary missions in the two parts of our country, to attain the common goals of completing national independence, unifying the homeland, and advancing to socialism. Those laws for winning victory were very clearly manifested in our Party's revolutionary line and revolutionary war.

The Party Central Committee agreed unanimously with the assessment of the June 1973 resolution of the Military Commission, which had been approved by the Political Bureau. According to that assessment, there were two possibilities: because our active struggle on the political, military, and diplomatic fronts, we could gradually force the enemy to carry out the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and peace would be restored; or we would have to wage a difficult, fierce revolutionary war to defeat the enemy and win complete victory.

The Party Central Committee affirmed that "The revolutionary path of the South is the path of revolutionary violence. No matter what the situation, we must maintain the offensive strategy line."

According to the Party Central Committee, "The basic mission of the revolution in the South in the new phase is to continue to implement the strategy of the people's democratic national revolution, achieve national solidarity, struggle against the U.S. imperialists and the ruling comprador capitalist, bureaucratic, militarist, fascist clique, an effective tool of the U.S. imperialists which is ruling in the area controlled by the enemy, gradually push back and defeat the enemy until we eventually eliminate the U.S. lackey administration, eliminate the neocolonial regime, set up a truly democratic and national administration, achieve national conciliation, escape completely from dependence on the U.S., and achieve a South Vietnam that is peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral, and prosperous, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland."

The motto and operational mode of the revolution in the South was to firmly grasp the concept of strategic offensive, but the struggle forms, offensive tactics, and defensive tactics had to be applied flexibly and astutely, depending on the time, the specific circumstances of each area, or even each particular struggle, while maintaining and developing our forces in all respects, disintegrating and weakening the enemy's military and political forces, and causing the comparison of forces between ourselves and the enemy to change to our advantage. We absolutely had to be strong both politically and militarily in all three strategic areas.

The Party Central Committee defined the motto of military activity as follows: "We must resolutely counterattack and attack the enemy and maintain and develop our initiative in all regards, in order to defeat the enemy's 'pacification' and encroachment plans, especially in the lowland and contiguous areas." "The application of that motto must be tied in with the requirement of winning control of the population and winning the right of mastery, in order to gain the strength with which to defeat the enemy," but it had to be based on the specific circumstances of each area.

The 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee, which was meticulously prepared by the Political Bureau, was a very timely meeting which was held only 9 months after the signing of the Paris Agreement and was one of the Party's historically significant plenums. On the basis of recapitulating and isolating the principal laws for winning victory during the 18 years of the anti-U.S. resistance war, the Party Central Committee made a major decision to complete the democratic national revolution in the South. The resolution of the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee was a very basic guidance resolution of the Party after the victory of the Paris Agreement. It would bring about a transformation of the situation, from the

victories in the latter part of 1973 and in 1974 to the general offensive and uprising of the spring of 1975, the completion of the victory of the anti-U.S. resistance war, the liberation of the South, and the unification of the nation.

In October 1973 and March 1974 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, implementing the resolution of the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee, issued resolutions assessing the situation and setting forth our military position.

In its resolution of October 1973 the Military Commission observed that since June 1973, because we promptly overcame our deficiencies and made all-out efforts, we had annihilated an important part of the enemy's manpower, maintained our vast liberated areas and base areas, and maintained our strategic pressure on the enemy. Some places had been able to disrupt the enemy's encroachment plans and maintain the liberated enclaves in the lowlands. With regard to building up our forces, we were able to rectify some of the deficiencies of the armed forces, especially the main-force units, and surpassed the plan norm regarding the transporting of supplies to the battlefields. With regard to the revolutions in the neighboring countries, we actively helped Laos and Kampuchea to continue to win victories.

However, there were some policies we were not yet able to carry out, so we still allowed the loss of population and land; had not yet been able to overcome the imbalance between the main-force troops and the local troops and between the concentrated forces and the military and guerrilla forces; the rate of the build-up of the strategic rear area was still slow; and difficulties were being encountered in building up the liberated areas. With regard to the fighting, we had not yet closely coordinated fighting at the front with deep penetration behind enemy lines, and had not yet coordinated the fighting with the political struggle. The Military Commission of the Party Central Committee sternly pointed out that "The principal reason is that we have deficiencies, not that the enemy is strong."

The Military Commission stated that our military objectives and operational guidelines for the coming period would be to, on the basis of fully understanding and implementing the resolution of the Party Central Committee, coordinate closely with the political, diplomatic, and legal struggles; concentrate on defeating the enemy's "pacification" plan in the lowland and contiguous areas; defeat their encroachment plan; hold the liberated enclaves; recover the areas taken by the enemy; expand and selectively consolidate our liberated area; disrupt the enemy's plan to blockade us economically; positively encourage self-sufficiency production; simultaneously fight, consolidate, and improve the fighting quality of the armed forces; prepare in all ways, including the preparation of the battlefield, in order to be prepared to fight on a large scale when the opportunity arises; and positively assist the revolutions in Laos and Kampuchea.

In its resolution of March 1974 the Military Commission set forth the guidelines for the next few years: "Our emphasis will be on inflicting an important defeat on the enemy's 'pacification' and encroachment plans, and on winning control of the population and winning mastery in the lowlands and in the outskirts of the large, prosperous cities. We must gradually advance the political struggle movement in the cities, while also preparing base-level forces and creating conditions and opportunities for bringing about a revolutionary high tide. The main-force troops must simultaneously fight and build, gradually increase the scale of the



annihilating battles, and simultaneously fight and monitor the enemy's reactions, in order to take prompt counter-measures. We must consolidate, build, and hold the liberated areas and base areas in the South. We must endeavor to restore and develop the economy, and build the North so that it is strong economically and defensively and prepared to defeat all enemy plots. We must completely change the comparison of forces to our advantage, weaken and imperil the enemy, and force them to adhere to the agreement and implement it step-by-step or face a major defeat. At the same time, we must create conditions, grasp the opportunities, and be prepared to take the initiative in coordinating three fists -- the rural areas, the cities, and the main-force troops -- in order to transform the situation unexpectedly and rapidly, so that the enemy do not have time to react, and win the greatest possible victory for the revolution."

After the 1972 strategic offensive, in each of the strategic areas our armed forces carried out a series of offensive campaigns and defensive campaigns, on scales of from three to six divisions, concentrated in a certain direction, in a relatively large area, and over a long period of time.

As they entered the new phase, our armed forces in general and our main-force troops in particular were stronger than ever but were organized only up to the division level. In the final phase of the war it would be necessary to organize one large campaign after another. Those campaigns would take place very urgently; the forces would operate continuously and would move rapidly in a large area of operations and from one battlefield to another; and the forces participating in the campaigns would be very large and consist of many armed forces branches and combat arms with strong technical equipment, which had the goal of annihilating large enemy units in order to conclude the war. The formation of main-force quan doan [corps] was extremely necessary in order to fulfill that historic mission.

The Party Central Committee adopted the policy of organizing strategic quan doan, beginning on 24 October 1973 with the formation of 1st Quan Doan, which consisted of a number of infantry divisions and combined-arms units and was stationed in the northern provinces.

On 17 May 1974 there was formed 2nd Quan Doan, consisting of a number of units fighting in the Tri-Thien zone.

On 20 July 1974 there was formed 4th Quan Doan, consisting of a number of units fighting in eastern Nam Bo.

The main-force forces in the Central Highlands, which had long concentrated many divisions in large campaigns under the command of a front command, were victorious, liberated Buon Ma Thuot and the entire Central Highlands area and annihilated most of the forces of the enemy's II Corps. On 27 March 1975 most of the divisions there were organized into the 3d Quan Doan, a strategic binh doan [corps] which participated in the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign, which liberated Saigon.

In the General Offensive and Uprising of the Spring of 1975, the strategic mobile quan doan were truly strong main-force fists and victoriously fulfilled their campaign and strategic missions. The quan doan all achieved very great results, both in annihilating the enemy's campaign and strategic forces and in liberating large



land areas and large numbers of people, and played an important strategic role in the Central Highlands and Hue-Da Nang campaigns. Especially in the historic Ho Chi Minh campaign the quan doan coordinated with the local armed forces and the political forces to annihilate or rout more than 400,000 enemy troops, liberated a large area, including Saigon, and brought about the complete collapse of the puppet army and the puppet administration.

October 1974 and January 1975: The Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee makes and supplements a historic decision to complete the liberation of the South.

Fully understanding and implementing the resolution of the 21st Plenum of the Party Central Committee and the October 1973 and March 1974 resolutions of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, in 1974 our troops in the South continually attacked the enemy and won many victories.

The puppet troops had to retreat step by step to defend the cities, the lines of communication, and the strategically significant areas. They were unable to retake and had to abandon, a number of areas we had taken, such as Nha Bich and Tong Le Chan in eastern Nam Bo; Tanh Linh in Military Region 6; Dac Pet, Ta Xup, Mang Den, and Mang But in the Central Highlands; and Nong Son and Gia Vut in Military Region 5. Because the U.S. Congress cut the supplemental aid appropriation, and because he was encountering serious economic difficulties, Nguyen Van Thieu had to adopt the policy of "fighting a poor man's war," something a reactionary lackey army cannot do. In August 1974 we attacked and mastered the Thuong Duc district capital and subsector (in Quang Nam Province). The puppet army used nearly all of its strategic reserve airborne division in a counterattack lasting several months but it could not retake it and had to call off the counterattack. Its "pacification" and encroachment plan was essentially defeated.

For our part, in the South the appearance of quan doans and binh doans equivalent to quan doans, stationed in the important theaters, created a major transformation in the comparison of forces. The strategic networks, along both the eastern and western Truong Son routes, were extended to Loc Ninh, and the pipeline crossed the Central Highlands and entered Zone 5 and eastern Nam Bo. In the north, after nearly 2 years of arduous endeavor, by 1974 many economic aspects had more or less risen to 1965 levels, and we sent to the south a large number of troops of the various kinds and a large quantity of military supplies, which far exceeded the plan levels of previous years.

The messy Watergate affair dragged the U.S. into one of its worst political crises ever. Nixon was overthrown and was replaced by Ford. Ford, a president who came to power without being elected, had to continue to cut aid to the Saigon puppet regime and could come up with no effective way to save it from its peril.

The international situation was also rather complicated, especially in Southeast Asia. Because of the approaching victory of the revolutionary war in Vietnam, the imperialists and international reactionaries wanted to compete for influence in that region and wanted to restrain us, but they were still at odds with one another, had not yet reached an agreement with one another, and none of those countries was fully prepared.

The war had entered its final phase, the comparison of forces had changed -- we had become stronger and the enemy had become weaker -- and that situation allowed us to calculate and prepare a "plan to liberate the South."

On 21 July 1974, comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, expressed some opinions in favor of a plan to liberate the South. He observed that "The present opportunity is most favorable," that it was necessary to take advantage of that opportunity to fulfill our people's historic mission. If we delayed the situation would become very complicated for us. In accordance with a directive of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, the General Staff urgently made all-round preparations for that strategic plan.

Between 30 September and 8 October 1974 the Political Bureau met to analyze the new strategic opportunity and made the historic decision to completely liberate the South.

Evaluating the situation, the Political Bureau noted that since the beginning of 1974 we had, by making all-out efforts in many respects, attained great results in our strategic preparations. We had maintained and strongly developed the strategic initiative and had put the enemy on the defensive on all battlefields. We had increased the strength of our armed forces, especially the main-force troops, and had overextended and weakened the puppet army, especially its mobile main-force troops, thus causing our main-force troops to be far superior to the enemy's main-force troops. We also consolidated and expanded our offensive staging areas in the key strategic areas and did a relatively good job of preparing materiel stockpiles and strategic and campaign roads.

The U.S. was encountering increasing difficulty at home and abroad. Therefore, it had to reduce its aid to the puppets and was hardly capable of jumping back into the South, and no matter how it intervened it could not save the Saigon puppet regime from collapse and could not stop the advance of the revolution in the final phase of the war.

In the cities there was a movement to demand peace, livelihood, democracy, national independence, and the overthrow of Thieu.

The new victories of the Laotian revolution and the Kampuchean revolution further strengthened the revolution in the South. The people of the world were sympathetic toward and strongly supported our people's just struggle.

We brought about a ripe strategic opportunity and created important strategic factors for winning complete victory.

The Political Bureau unanimously approved a plan to liberate the South in 1975 and 1976, and selected the Central Highlands as the principal focal point of a large-scale, widespread offensive in 1975. In the Central Highlands the enemy were relatively weak and we had many advantages for moving forces south and bisecting central Vietnam. And in that area we could fully bring into play the strength of the technical combat arms. Thus the Central Highlands were an extremely important strategic area.

The Political Bureau also directed the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee and the General Staff to monitor and reach a conclusion about the U.S. reaction to our offensive activities during the 1974-1975 dry season, and to carefully calculate our materiel, munitions, and vehicles, for our military aid had been greatly reduced and we had to have plans to produce our own and to economize in their use.

Concluding the conference, comrade Le Duan, First Secretary of the Party Central Committee, analyzed the significance of that historic strategic mission as follows:

The time had come for us to make the decision to complete the democratic national revolution in the South. That was a very crucial, very important matter. It was crucial and important because for 30 years, since we won political power, we had continually been engaged in revolution and war. During several periods in which we opposed imperialism our revolutionary war had profound historical importance and epochal significance. It rallied a large force in a strategic location and opposed the strongest, most brutal imperialist country. Now we would complete the revolution and fulfill our epochal mission throughout the nation. That would exert an influence not only in our country, but also in Southeast Asia and the world.

He continued, "We had to fully realize its importance, but also had to fully realize its difficulties and complications. But we fully considered the possibilities, the comparison of forces, and everything else in making that decision, with the knowledge, understanding, and experience of the past 30 years, not of any one individual but of all of us."

Carrying out the directive of the Political Bureau and the Military Commission, on the battlefield the 1974-1975 dry season activity began at the end of 1974. At the same time, the organs and sectors of the High Command, and the various areas and units, feverishly worked to complete all strategic preparations. Meanwhile, the Political Bureau and the Military Commission, along with the battlefield commanders, prepared for an expanded Political Bureau conference from 18 December 1974 to 8 January 1975 to confirm and supplement the final decision, in accordance with the new development of the situation.

The Political Bureau made the following analysis: "The basic development of the situation during the past 2 years has clearly been that we are in a status of victory, advance, initiative and advantage, while the enemy is in a status of defeat, decline, passivity, and difficulty. That tendency cannot be reversed. The enemy's strengths are temporary and they are beset with internal contradictions and are becoming weaker. They are weakening across the board at an increasingly greater rate. Because of our activities and their internal difficulties the enemy may go into a precipitous decline. The comparison of forces between the enemy and ourselves, nationwide as well as on the southern battlefield, has undergone basic changes which clearly benefit the revolution. We are now stronger than the enemy."

"The U.S. imperialists would find it very difficult to intervene directly. If the puppets are in danger of a complete collapse, we must be on guard against the U.S. intervening with its air force or navy, not to expand the war but to save the Saigon regime. There is little possibility that they will use infantry, but we must continually monitor their plots, be vigilant, and be prepared to react. No matter

how they intervene, we will be fully determined and able to defeat them, and they cannot save the Saigon regime from collapse."

The Political Bureau concluded:

"We now have a very great strategic opportunity and have never had better military and political conditions than at present, or a better strategic opportunity to complete the people's national democratic revolution in the South in order to advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland, at a time when the revolutionary movements in the three Indochinese countries had strong offensive momentum and were winning increasingly greater victories."

On the basis of analyzing and evaluating the situation and that strategic opportunity, applying the laws of revolutionary warfare in our country, and promptly discovering the new elements of victory, the Political Bureau made the decision to "Mobilize the greatest possible efforts on the part of the entire Party, the entire army, and the entire population in both parts of the country to, in the 1975-1976 period, step up the military struggle and the political struggle, in combination with the diplomatic struggle, and rapidly and comprehensively change the comparison of forces on the southern battlefield along lines favorable to us, very urgently complete preparations in all regards, create ripe conditions, carry out a general offensive-general uprising, annihilate and disintegrate the puppet army, overthrow the puppet regime from the central level to the local level, win political power for the people, liberate South Vietnam, achieve a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral, and prosperous Vietnam, and advance to the peaceful unification of the homeland.

In view of the crucial, difficult, and complicated, but extremely glorious mission of our nation, the Political Bureau decided to "Mobilize all forces of the nation, unite a million people as one, overcome all difficulties, hardships, and sacrifices, and struggle heroically to advance, with very strong determination to fight and win."

The Political Bureau admonished that in the process of carrying out that strategic decision it was necessary to firmly grasp the basic laws of revolutionary war in our country: combining the military and the political, combining offensives with uprisings, and combining revolutionary war with armed uprisings are the general laws, the highest development of which is the general offensive-general uprising and the bringing into play of the combined strength of the military offensive, the political offensive, and the military proselyting offensive, in combination with the diplomatic offensive.

The Political Bureau also stressed that while the revolutionary war was becoming increasingly fierce and was being fought on an increasingly larger scale, we had to firmly grasp the law of having to annihilate and disintegrate the enemy's military forces, including manpower and war facilities, especially the regular troops, the final basis of support for the fascist lackey regime of the U.S. imperialists. For that reason, in general and as a whole the general offensive has a decisive significance, and must keep a step ahead, annihilate in order to achieve mastery, achieve mastery in order to annihilate, tighten the encirclements of the cities, and weaken -- and eventually smash -- the puppet army. Only then could favorable conditions be created for uprisings by the urban masses.



We had to grasp the laws of the mass revolutionary movement, endeavor to develop the political forces in the cities, and develop the political struggle into a high tide, in order to grasp the opportunity when conditions are ripe, and coordinate it with the general offensive and the general uprising. We had to arm the revolutionary masses and overthrow the enemy administrations in the cities.

Proselyting among enemy soldiers would also play a very important role in disintegrating the puppet army, creating an uprising movement within the puppet army, creating a dissident movement within the puppet army and administration, advance to the achievement of a worker-peasant-soldier alliance, and contribute to the victory of the general offensive-general uprising.

The Political Bureau paid much attention to the matter of the strategic opportunity. The entire year 1975 would be an opportune time, a strong offensive blow could create an opportunity the political movement could enhance the opportunity, and the situation in the world and in the U.S. afforded an opportunity. The opportunities would be on ordinary, medium, or high levels, or would occur suddenly, at a rate of "1 day equalling 20 years," so we had to act urgently and attack more rapidly, for if there was an opportunity but we did not promptly exploit it we would commit a major crime against the nation.

Therefore, in addition to the basic strategic plan covering the 1975-1976 2-year period there had to be a plan to exploit opportunities, so we prepared an additional plan and extremely important action guidance: if there was an opportunity at the beginning or end of 1975 we would immediately liberate the South in 1975. In order to exploit opportunities and develop advantages, we had to always have reserve forces and plans in the operational areas, for our actual strength was the decisive factor.

With regard to the operational guidance motto, the Political Bureau set forth the following:

1. Combining the military, political, and diplomatic struggles and fight so that the puppets collapse but the U.S. does not intervene.
2. Concentrating forces to the highest, most rational degree, attacking most strongly in the principal strategic area, striking decisive blows, and winning, by all means, decisive victories in the decisive areas.
3. Being bold, resolute, solid, active, flexible, sharp, and prompt, and maintaining absolute secrecy and surprise.
4. Grasping opportunities, fully exploiting opportunities, expanding the victories and winning the greatest possible victory.

We had to endeavor to win victory as quickly as possible, carry out the general offensive-general uprising in such a way as to limit the loss of manpower and materiel, reduce the post-war difficulties and aftereffects of the war, do a good job of preserving the economic and cultural installations and ensuring livelihood, so that we could fully utilize the raw materials and equipment in the economic and cultural development of our country after complete victory.

The Political Bureau conference of October 1974 and the expanded Political Bureau conference of January 1975 were of important historical significance. The Political Bureau very accurately analyzed the new developments in the situation, made decisions, and set forth extremely important operational guidelines for the soldier soldiers and people of the entire nation in view of the great opportunity. They were torches which illuminated the path to the great victory of the spring of 1975.

1975

December 1974 to February 1975: The dry-season campaign on the Nam Bo battlefield.

Implementing the October 1974 decision of the Political Bureau and the "two-year plan to liberate the South," and on the basis of good preparations in eastern Nam Bo, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee and the Regional Military Commission guided the carrying out of the 1974-1975 dry-season activity campaign, the first campaign of the 1975 operational plan. During that campaign we attacked the enemy to fulfill certain key requirements in the Mekong Delta and eastern Nam Bo. On the other battlefields there were small and medium coordinated activities, principally to make additional preparations for future campaigns.

On the Mekong Delta front, the activities of Military Region 9 attained good results. Within a period of 3 months (6 December 1974 to mid-February 1975) it knocked out of action about 20,000 of the enemy, wiped out or forced the abandonment of nearly 800 bases, subsectors, and outposts (including 2 subsectors, 2 strongpoints, and 51 military subsector branches), completely liberated 27 villages, essentially liberated 36 villages and 287 hamlets with more than 400,000 people, essentially gained control of the rural areas in Vinh Tra, shattered the defensive line around Chuong Thien, consolidated and expanded the base area, and connected it with a corridor extending down from the border.

Military Region forced the abandonment of 320 outposts and liberated 193 hamlets (14 villages were completely liberated and 17 were essentially liberated) with a population of nearly 100,000. During that activity campaign the situation in the Mekong Delta underwent important transformations. We controlled 2.5 million of a total population of 7 million, 1.44 million of whom were completely liberated.

On the eastern Nam Bo front we used part of the 4th Quan Doan to carry out a campaign in the Route 14-Phuoc Long area and won a major victory. In a period of more than 20 days (12 December 1974 to 6 January 1975) we killed or captured more than 3,000 of the enemy, captured more than of the various kinds, and liberated Route 14 and the city and province of Phuoc Long (6 January 1974), the first province in the South to be completely liberated.

In the Tanh Linh-Hoai Duc area we knocked out of action 2,400 of the enemy and completely liberated Tanh Linh District and 4 villages in Hoai Duc District, with a population of nearly 35,000.

In Tay Ninh, on 7 January 1975 we took the enemy's observation post on Mt. Ba Den. In the outskirts of Saigon we completely liberated 4 villages and 37 hamlets with a total population of nearly 18,000, weakened the enemy's control, and created

favorable conditions for the regiments to remain in the vicinity.

Noteworthy was the fact that when Phuoc Long and Mt. Ba Den were lost the puppet army reacted mainly by using its air force (it used 116 fighter-bombers in concentrated attacks and 160 helicopters of the 5th Air Division) and counterattacked with mobile forces of III Corps, but the counterattack was called off when it produced no results, for their strategic mobile forces were bogged down in Military Region I and the enemy had to be on guard against our attacks in other areas. As for the U.S. imperialists, they only threatened and applied pressure from afar, such as putting the 3rd Marine Division on Okinawa on alert, threatening to resume the bombing if we attacked, and sending the aircraft carrier Enterprise from the Philippines to the South China Sea off the coast of South Vietnam. But on 9 January 1975 the U.S. Embassy informed Thieu, "We have not yet been authorized to provide U.S. air support." On 22 January 1975 Ford announced that "We will take no action other than supplemental aid to Saigon; we will not intervene in South Vietnam without following constitutional and legislative procedures." When the U.S. asked him for a clarification, Ford had to order the Enterprise to the Indian Ocean.

The results of that activity campaign were that in Nam Bo and Military Region 6 we put out of action 56,315 of the enemy, wiped out 22 battalions and 66 puppet village administrations, 1 river flotilla, and 1 armored squadron, inflicted heavy losses on 15 battalions and 4 armored squadrons, captured 12,122 weapons of the various kinds, 786 radios, 118 vehicles, and 2 airplanes, destroyed 108 airplanes, 110 ships, and 494 motor vehicles, forced the abandonment of nearly 1,550 posts (including 1 sector, 2 subsectors, 3 strongpoints, and nearly 90 military subsector branches), completely liberated 1 province, 4 districts, 72 villages, and nearly 400 hamlets, essentially liberated 55 other villages, and liberated nearly 600,000 people.

The 1974-1975 dry-season offensive won a great victory. Those victories, especially in the Military Region 9 lowlands and Phuoc Long, were very important. They signified a new decline of the Saigon puppet army. The puppet regular troops were no longer capable of carrying out large-scale relief operations to retake the important areas, bases, and cities which we took in the mountain and contiguous areas. They further demonstrated the retreat of the U.S. imperialists with regard to their intention and capability to intervene in South Vietnam. The U.S. imperialists, who were running up against major domestic difficulties and who were divided internally, responded weakly to our offensive blows. Those victories caused the rural areas which we had liberated and mastered to differing degrees to continually expand and link up with one another. Our area of operations was consolidated and moved up close to the enemy's key areas. They reflected our new capability to win major victories in a brief period of time at a rapid rate, to take and hold a city on the jungle-and-mountains battlefield, and to completely liberate a province.

Those victories were an extremely important actual basis on which the Political Bureau conference of January 1975 affirmed, supplemented, and completed its decision to complete the people's democratic national revolution in the South in 1975 and 1976, with a very bold spirit and readiness to grasp the opportunity to completely liberate the South in 1975.

4 March to 23 March: The Central Highlands campaign wins a great victory. The general offensive and general uprising throughout the South wins great initial victories.

In December 1974 Nguyen Van Thieu met with the leaders of the puppet army to predict our activities in 1975. They believed that we could fight on a larger scale than in 1974, but not as large a scale as in 1968 or 1972; that we were not yet capable of attacking large cities or municipalities and were incapable of holding them if we did take them; that we could attack such small cities as Phuoc Long or Gia Nghia; and that our principal requirements were to win control of 2 million people in the Mekong Delta and to expand our liberated area in the mountain region. They believed that our objective was to win victory in order to force them to carry out the Paris Agreements on Vietnam and that our offensive in the first part of 1975 would take place in Military Region 3, with emphasis on taking Tay Ninh to serve as the capital of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam. With regard to time, they predicted that we would attack before or after Tet and last until June 1975, stopping when the rainy season began.

Because of that assessment, they did not change their "strong at both ends" strategic deployment; i.e. Military Region 1 and Military Region 3 and 4, without any reinforcement of Military Region 2 and the Central Highlands. In fact, at that time they no longer had reserve forces to send as reinforcements. The defeat at Phuoc Long had demonstrated that.

With regard to methods, they advocated striking first to upset our preparatory plan. They carried out an "urgent pacification plan" during a 3-month period beginning on 1 January 1975 to prevent us from launching a "winter-spring campaign" and ordered an alert during Tet, etc.

The enemy, with such conclusions, policies, and methods, were completely caught by surprise strategically when our general offensive began.

Carrying out the strategic decision of the Political Bureau, the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee decided to use strong regular forces to launch a large-scale offensive in the Central Highlands and concentrate the main forces in the southern Central Highlands, in order to annihilate an important part of the enemy's manpower, take Buon Ma Thuot City, liberate Dac Lac Province, and then liberate all of the Central Highlands and develop the attack down into Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa, thus achieving a strategic interdiction.

The Political Bureau and the Military Commission decided to send Senior General Van Tien Dung, a member of the Political Bureau and Chief of Staff, to directly guide and command the campaign.

In order to ensure the victory of the key, opening battle we had to create all necessary conditions for attacking Buon Ma Thuot while the enemy were off guard, in order to achieve surprise and surround and isolate them. Therefore, in the key area we had to concentrate forces larger than those of the enemy, positively carry out feints, positively mislead the enemy, divide, surround, and isolate the enemy, achieve surprise, attack very strongly, and prevent the enemy from reacting in time, or from promptly counterattacking to retake the city once we had taken it.



In that spirit, on 4 March 1975 we attacked to cut routes 19 and 21 connecting the Central Highlands with the lowlands of Military Region 5 and launched medium-scale and small-scale diversionary attacks in Play Cu and Cong Tum. Then, on 8 March, we took Thuan Man and cut Route 14 between Play Cu and Buon Ma Thuot; and on 9 March we took the Duc Lap-Nui Lua area and completely isolated Buon Ma Thuot.

On 10 March 1975 we concentrated forces consisting of 1 infantry division, 2 infantry regiments, 1 sapper regiment, 1 tank company, 2 artillery regiments, and 3 anti-aircraft regiments to launch a direct attack on Buon Ma Thuot and wiped out all of the enemy forces there, consisting of the headquarters of the 23rd Division, the 53rd Regiment (minus a battalion) of the 23rd Division, an armored squadron, an R.F. battalion and 4 R.F. companies, and 57 popular force platoons. After two days of combat we had completely mastered the city of Buon Ma Thuot and smashed a large segment of the enemy's defensive system on the Central Highlands battlefield.

On 11 March the Political Bureau met and made the following assessment: "The victories at Buon Ma Thuot, Duc Lap, on Route 19, and in the other areas prove that we are capable of winning a great victory more quickly than anticipated."

During that meeting, comrade Le Duan contributed the following opinion: "We previously estimated that it would take 2 years to liberate the South. Now, after Phuoc Long and Buon Ma Thuot, we can accelerate the pace. Were they the first steps of the strategic general offensive? We must think about that."

The Political Bureau once again affirmed that there was even less possibility that the U.S. imperialists would intervene and directed the General Staff to urgently draft a plan to liberate the rest of the Central Highlands, liberate Hue and Danang, and foresaw even greater opportunities.

The Military Commission of the Party Central Committee directed the Central Highlands Front to resolutely defeat and annihilate the enemy's counterattacks, rapidly develop its offensive, surround and eventually annihilate Play Cu, cut Route 19, and isolate Cong Tum.

The enemy, struck with a lightening blow, hastily sent the remaining two regiments of the 23rd Division and the 21st Ranger Group to counterattack, in hopes of retaking Buon Ma Thuot. After 5 straight days of fighting our troops had annihilated all of the counterattacking enemy forces, then developed their attack down into Khanh Duong and Ninh Hoa.

On 13 March 1975 the Military Commission further directed: "In the event that the enemy lose a large part of its manpower and lose the city of Buon Ma Thuot and many district capitals and subsectors, and we did a good of cutting strategic Route 19, the enemy may concentrate their remaining forces in the Central Highlands in Play Cu. We must also consider the possibility that they may be forced to carry out a strategic withdrawal. Therefore, we must surround Play Cu and make good preparations for annihilating the enemy in both eventualities."

The Military Commission's assessment was entirely correct and sharp, and was very timely. Sure enough, on the morning of 14 March Thieu went to Cam Ranh to order

the evacuation of Play Cu-Cong Tum in order to hold the coastal area and later to concentrate forces to carry out a counterattack.

On 16 March our main-force troops quickly intercepted and pursued the enemy fleeing along Route 7. Meanwhile, a unit of the Tuy Hoa local troops was ordered to block the enemy at Cung Son. By 24 March all of the withdrawing enemy troops had been annihilated. The Central Highlands campaign concluded victoriously. The puppet II Corps forces defending that area were completely wiped out. We liberated all of the strategically very important Central Highlands area of the southern battlefield.

Coordinating with the Central Highlands, the Military Region 5, Tri-Thien, and Nam Bo battlefields launched campaigns or stepped up their attacks on the enemy and won many victories.

-- Military Region 5 completed its interdiction and took many important segments of Route 19. Especially, the local armed forces attacked and liberated large contiguous areas in Quang Nam-Quang Ngai (Tien Phuoc, Phuoc Lan, Son Ha, Tra Bong, Binh Son, and Son Tinh).

-- In Tri-Thien, beginning on 8 March 1975 the main-force troops were very active in the contiguous area and, in coordination with the local troops and the militia and guerrilla forces, stepped up their activities in the lowlands area.

-- In Nam Bo, in the offensives on Routes 13 and 20, we occupied many important staging areas around Saigon, to the northwest (Dau Tieng, Suoi Ong Hung, and Cau Khoi) and to the northeast (Dinh Quan and Vo Duc), liberated Route 20, Route 3, and a segment of National Route 1 (between Long Khanh and Rung La), and threatened Xuan Loc. In the Mekong Delta we launched combined offensive campaigns, expanded the liberated area, and penetrated deeply into a number of key areas.

In the first offensive cycle, the simultaneous attacks all over the South, we victoriously carried out offensive campaigns on the battlefields, especially the strategic campaign on the Central Highlands front.

Within a short period of time we annihilated or disintegrated an important part of the enemy's manpower, essentially wiped out the puppet II Corps, smashed the enemy's political administration, liberated many important areas, especially in the strategic Central Highlands, smashed the enemy's strategic defensive position in Military Region II, and forced them to take a new step downward and change over from the strategic defensive to strategic enclaves. The battlefield situation changed. A specific strategic opportunity appeared.

On 17 March, while the Central Highlands campaign was still developing, we were certain of victory and greatly exceeded requirements. The Military Commission met to prepare for a new direction of activity in order to fully exploit the favorable opportunity we had won. On 18 March the Political Bureau met and decided to fulfill the two-year plan in 1975. It determined that the principal focus of the strategic offensive would be Saigon, but that it would be necessary to immediately annihilate puppet I Corps. It was a decision to pursue the strategic general

offensive to complete victory. The Political Bureau assigned to the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee the task of drafting a plan to carry out that new decision.

21 March to 3 April: the Hue-Da Nang Campaign wins a big victory. The offensive develops, completely liberates the central and southern Trung Bo provinces.

After its 18 March meeting, on 25 March, the Political Bureau held another meeting and observed that "In actuality, with the great victory of the Central Highlands campaign our strategic general offensive. Our repeated victories since then signify a turning point in the military-political situation in the South, which has entered the phase of great-leap-forward development."

The Political Bureau observed that "A major strategic opportunity has arrived. Never before in the 20 years of resisting the U.S. for national salvation has the situation been as favorable as it is now," and that therefore it was necessary to "grasp the new strategic opportunity, make maximum use of time, rapidly concentrate our forces in the key direction, act boldly, achieve surprise, prevent the enemy from predicting our moves in time and from having time to react, and fulfill the mission of liberating the South as soon as possible." It decided to complete the liberation of Saigon and the South before the rainy season (May 1975).

The principal strategic direction was concentrating the forces of the entire nation on liberating Saigon-Gia Dinh in order to completely liberate the South. In order to fulfill that basic mission, the immediate strategic mission would be to fight a war-deciding strategic battle to take Hue and Da Nang, wipe out the puppet I Corps and prevent it from withdrawing to defend Saigon, and rapidly liberate the central and southern Trung Bo provinces, while stepping up all preparations for the final war-deciding battle to liberate Saigon.

The Political Bureau and the Military Commission, on the basis of organizing the main-force units of the Central Highlands Command, decided to set up the 3rd Quan Doan [Corps] to serve as the Command's strategic mobile force and prepare to send it south to participate in the liberation of Saigon. The Political Bureau also decided to set up a Battlefield Aid Council chaired by Premier Pham Van Dong.

The Hue-Da Nang Campaign was our main activity after the Central Highlands victory. The forces participating in the campaign included more than a corps. The battlefield was divided into two zones: Tri Thien-Hue and Quang Nam-Da Nang, the principal objectives of which were Hue and Da Nang. It was a campaign which took form in the process of development from a strategic offensive to a strategic general offensive under the direct guidance and command of the Military Commission and the High Command, which stimulated its rapid development on the basis of two offensive campaigns of the two localities: the spring-summer campaign of Tri-Thien and the spring-summer campaign of Military Region 5. It was the second war-deciding strategic battle, which created conditions for the final war-deciding strategic battle, the liberation of Saigon and the entire South.

The Military Commission foresaw two possibilities and two contingency plans for the Da Nang campaign:

--First, the enemy might pull back their forces to conduct an organized, relatively solid defense of Da Nang, in which case we would use the 2nd Quan Doan and rapidly send the 1st Quan Doan south to, along with the forces of Military Region 5, carry out a large-scale combined arms operation to take Da Nang.

--Second, the enemy would be routed and suffer heavy losses, and Da Nang would be isolated. In that case we would take advantage of the opportunity, rapidly develop our attack, and take Da Nang by relying principally on our on-the-spot forces.

The Political Bureau and the Military Commission decided to set up the Quang Nam-Da Nang Front Command to command the attack in accordance with the first contingency plan, with Lieutenant General Le Trong Tan serving as Commander and Colonel Chu Huy Man serving as political officer.

The situation developed very rapidly along the lines of the second possibility.

To the north, on 17 March the High Command directed the Tri-Thien Military Region and the 2nd Quan Doan to attack earlier than planned, for the enemy there were in a chaotic state and a favorable new opportunity had appeared. The strong activity of the main-force troops and local troops of Tri-Thien, added to our victory in the Central Highlands, had caused the enemy troops in Quang Tri to panic and withdraw on 18 March, thus creating a breach in their northern defenses and creating great chaos in the Thua Thien-Hue area. On 21 March the Tri-Thien forces made deep penetrations, divided the enemy, cut off the enemy's escape route from Da Nang along Route 1, blocked the Thuan An and Tu Hien outlets to the sea, surrounded the enemy in Hue and, along with the local armed forces and the mass uprising political movement, attacked the enemy everywhere. The enemy panicked and fled in all directions. Our soldiers and people annihilated or disintegrated nearly all of the 1st Marine Division and the 147th Marine Brigade. At 1030 hours on 25 March our soldiers and people liberated the city of Hue and Thua Thien Province.

With that victory, Da Nang was seriously threatened from the north. The spring-summer campaign of Military Region 5 began on 4 March 1975. South of Da Nang, the local armed forces and revolutionary masses attacked and arose in the Quang Nam lowlands. The Quang Ngai forces won a great initial victory, liberating Tien Phuoc and Phuoc Lam districts. Because of the enemy's rapid collapse, on 23 March 1975 the Standing Committee of the Military Region 5 Party Committee decided to "liberate Military Region 5 as quickly as possible" and was determined to smash the enemy's scheme of pulling back to the Chu Lai line to defend Da Nang from the south. Combining military attacks with the strong uprisings of the masses, on 24 March we liberated Tam Ky and cut Route 1. On 25 March Quang Ngai was liberated. Then we developed our attack and took the Chu Lai base on 26 March, annihilated the entire puppet 2nd Division, liberated all of the southern part of Military Region 1, and created yet another threat to Da Nang, from the south.

The Hue, Quang Nam, and Chu Lai victories and the annihilation of the enemy's 1st Division, 2nd Division, and 147th Marine Brigade were important blows to their plan to pull back and form a large enclave in order to defend Da Nang. We had very favorable conditions for "concentrating forces to annihilate a major part of the enemy's manpower at Da Nang and winning a major victory in that war-deciding strategic battle." (Message from the Military Commission to Military Region 5 on 26 March.)



In the Da Nang area there were still many enemy troops, about 75,000 in all, consisting of 15 battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division, a Marine Division, and remnants of the 1st and 2nd divisions, the 12th Ranger Group, 15 Regional Force battalions, two Popular Force battalions and 240 Popular Force platoons, 24,000 civil guards, 5,000 policemen, the 1st Air Division with 373 aircraft of the various kinds, 7 artillery battalions (with 114 artillery pieces of the various kinds), and the 11th Cavalry Squadron (70 tanks and armored vehicles). But they were suffering a major defeat, were isolated, were experiencing a collapse of morale, were shattered organizationally, and were confused with regard to command. Therefore, the Military Commission decided to attack Da Nang in accordance with the second contingency plan, to "bypass the objectives along the way and attack Da Nang directly, as rapidly, promptly, and boldly as possible, with forces that can most quickly be sent in." (Message from the Military Commission to Military Region 5 on 26 March.)

On 28 March our heavy artillery at Mui Trai pass, at Hai Van pass, and south of Da Nang shelled the airfield, the port, the Son Tra Peninsula, and the ships taking on the fleeing enemy. DaNang became even more chaotic.

On 29 March the 2nd Quan Doan divided into three columns north, northwest, and south west of Da Nang. Along with mechanized and tank units, they fought their way into the city and took the airfield and City Hall. One element took the Son Tra Peninsula.

The forces of Military Region 5 to the south and southwest, bypassing the objectives on the outer perimeter, rapidly penetrated into the city and, in coordination with the 2nd Quan Doan, took the Da Nang air base and the headquarters of the puppet I Corps.

On the same day, the local armed forces and revolutionary masses, coordinating with the main-force troops, liberated Hoi An and a number of other places. In the city of Da Nang the guerrilla and self-defense forces coordinated in attacking the prison, safeguarding the economic production, cultural, and public welfare installations, and maintaining order and security, in order to ensure that the city could resume normal activities immediately after the liberation.

Coordinating beautifully, our main-force corps, following the orders of the High Command and the Campaign Command, strongly developed their offensive from the Central Highlands battlefield down into the central coastal provinces, along routes 19, 7, and 21. Coordinating with the mass uprising movement, the offensive forces liberated Binh Dinh Province and the city of Quy Nhon (1 April), annihilated most of the puppet 2nd Division, liberated Phu Yen Province and the city of Tuy Hoa (1 April), and liberated Khanh Hoa Province, the city of Nha Trang, and the military port of Cam Ranh (3 April).

The local troops and uprising masses in the provinces of the southern Central Highlands, along with a number of main-force units, liberated Quang Duc Province and Gia Nghia City (24 March), Lam Dong Province and the city of Bao Loc (2 April), and Tuyen Duc Province and the city of Da Lat (4 April).

During the same period of time, in Nam Bo the soldiers and people of Binh Long, attacking and arsing, took the city of An Loc, took the military subsector and provincial capital of Chon Thanh, and liberated all of Binh Long Province. The soldiers and people of the provinces of Thu Dau Mot, Tay Ninh, Long An, Long Khanh,

and Binh Tuy, attacking and arising, annihilated the military subsectors and district capitals of Dau Tieng, Binh Quan, and Hoai Duc and a whole series of military strongpoints, and liberated a vast, integrated area north and northwest of Saigon. The soldiers and people of the Mekong Delta provinces arose, annihilated many of the enemy, wiped out or forced the abandonment of thousands of outposts, won mastery in many localities, and expanded the liberated area.

The second activity cycle, centered around the Hue-Da Nang campaign, won a very great victory. Within a short period of time we knocked out of action the puppets I Corps and Marine division, wiped out or disintegrated all of the enemy's military forces and their control apparatus, and liberated all of central Trung Bo and a number of provinces in Military Region 6 and eastern Nam Bo.

Those war-deciding strategic victories smashed the enemy's enclave strategy, prevented them from withdrawing forces to reinforce their defenses around Saigon, and outstandingly fulfilled the strategic missions assigned by the Political Bureau.

The comparison of positions and forces on the battlefield underwent a great transformation that was entirely in our favor. Two of the four enemy military regions had been eliminated. They lost nearly half of their forces, and the rest were in a hopeless situation, had poor morale, were shattered organizationally, had suffered large losses of materiel and technical facilities, and were completely deadlocked strategically and tactically. We had liberated a vast area encompassing 16 provinces and 6 municipalities and cities. Including the liberated areas in eastern Nam Bo and the Mekong Delta, our liberated area accounted for three-fourths of the area and nearly half the population of the South. The direct rear area was vast, had rich resources, and was connected with the socialist North. The combat effectiveness of our troops was greater than ever. We were capable of annihilating and disintegrating entire enemy corps and could attack and take cities with the largest enemy base complexes in the lowlands by carrying out large-scale offensives. Coming of age as they fought, the main-force quan doans were capable of rapid movement, were fully equipped, and were very experienced in combat.

Clearly, we had new, extremely favorable conditions before we entered the final war-war-determining strategic battle.

17 April: The soldiers and people of Kampuchea victoriously conclude the anti-U.S. resistance war in Kampuchea.

After their great victories in 1971 and 1972, between the beginning of 1973 and the end of 1974 the soldiers and people of Kampuchea carried out an offensive to surround Phnom Penh and place the U.S.-aided Lon Nol in an increasingly perilous position.

The spring 1975 general offensive and uprising in our country created strong repercussions on the Kampuchean battlefield. The U.S.-Saigon puppet gang and the lackey Lon Nol were extremely shaken. On the crest of the great victories of the Central Highlands and Hue-Da Nang campaigns in our country, the soldiers and people of Kampuchea broke the resistance of the Lon Nol in the outskirts and on 10 April completed the encirclement of Phnom Penh and shelled the center of the city.

On 12 April the U.S. had to carry out Operation "Eaglepull" to evacuate the last Americans from Phnom Penh.

On 17 April attacks from the north, northwest, west, east, and south smashed the defensive system of the Phnom Penh puppet army. The Lon Nol administration, a lackey of the U.S. imperialists, collapsed.

The victory soldiers and people of Kampuchea contributed to further weakening the U.S. imperialists and further bankrupted their global strategy. It was also a victory for the militant solidarity of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean people who, along with the Laotian people had fought side-by-side against the common enemy.

The victory of the Kampuchean soldiers and people at Phnom Penh was also a blow that was coordinated with the general offensive and uprising of our people, which was developing strongly on the South Vietnam battlefield. It once again clearly revealed the intention and capability of the U.S. imperialists in their intervention in the war in Indochina.

14 to 29 April: Liberation of the islands in the Paracel Archipelago occupied by the Saigon puppet army.

The Paracel and the Spratley archipelagos, situated in Vietnamese territory in the South China Sea, occupy very important positions and have long been coveted by the reactionary, expansionist rulers in Beijing.

On 20 January 1974, with the support of the U.S. imperialists, with whom they had made a deal, the Chinese used their air force and navy to take our Paracel Archipelago, which were then occupied by the Saigon puppet army. They wanted to achieve a fait accompli while our people were urgently preparing to liberate the South. They then turned over their POW's directly to the Saigon puppets.

With the occupation of the Paracel Archipelago and their invasion of part of our territory, the Beijing rulers began to openly apply their policy of expansionism against Vietnam.

Our Party vehemently protested, but in order to maintain solidarity between the two peoples, while at the same time concentrating all capabilities on the enterprise of opposing the U.S. for national salvation, we patiently recommended that the two sides hold talks to resolve that problem. The Beijing rulers not only obstinately rejected our proposal but launched a deceptive propaganda campaign, presented bogus proof in order to hold on to our archipelago, and brazenly demanded the Spratley Archipelago as well.

At the beginning of April 1975, when we were in the process of completely liberating the coastal provinces of central Vietnam and southern Trung Bo, the Political Bureau decided to quickly liberate the islands in the Spratley Archipelago that were occupied by the Saigon puppet army, and regarded that as a very important mission. On 4 April 1975 the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee assigned that mission to the Command of Military Region 5 and to the Naval Command.

Urgently and strictly carrying out that order, and taking advantage of a favorable opportunity, during the night of 13 April and 14 April 1975 the forces of Military Region 5 and the Navy liberated Song Tu Tay Island, and during the night of 28 and early morning of 29 April completed the Nam Yet, Son Ca, Sinh Ton, Truong Son, and An Bang islands.

The decision to liberate all of the islands in the Spratley Archipelago occupied by the Saigon puppet army was a very sharp and timely policy of our Party, and was an important victory which stopped the expansionist plot of the reactionary clique in the Beijing ruling circles and of the imperialists and other reactionaries to occupy those islands of ours before we did. That victory created favorable conditions for the great undertaking of building and defending our country after the South was completely liberated.

9 April to 2 May: The historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign wins a complete victory and completely liberates the South.

On 1 April the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee held a meeting. After evaluating the victory that had been won and analyzing the situation, it concluded that "With regard to both strategy and military-political forces, we have sufficient strength to overwhelm the enemy troops, while the puppet army faces the peril of collapse and annihilation. The U.S. has proved to be completely impotent, and even if it increases its aid it cannot save the puppets from collapse. The revolutionary war in the South has entered a phase of great-leap-forward development and the strategic opportunity for carrying out a general offensive and general uprising in the enemy's lair is ripe. At this moment, the final war-deciding strategic battle of our soldiers and people to complete the people's democratic national revolution in the South and unify the country has begun."

Our country's revolution was developing more seethingly than ever, at the rate of 1 day equalling 20 years. The Political Bureau made the following decision: "Grasp the strategic opportunity, with the guiding thoughts of marvelous speed, boldness, surprise, and winning certain victory; and complete the general offensive and general uprising as soon as possible, preferably in April 1975, and not be tardy."

In order to carry out that decision, the Political Bureau decided such major things as the action motto, stepping up activities to the west of Saigon and in the Mekong Delta, rapidly sending forces from the north to eastern Nam Bo, and organizing unified leadership and command for both the Nam Bo battlefield and the campaign to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh. It decided to concentrate forces to ensure that the historic war-deciding battle won complete victory.

For the enemy's part, after they lost Military Region 1 and Military Region 2 they estimated that it would be 2 more months before we would be able to resume our offensive, so they adopted the policy of organizing a distant defense line, hold all of Military Region 3 and Military Region 4, hinder and slow down our offensive until the rainy season, and the retake a number of areas they had lost in order to negotiate with us. Phan Rang was an important anchor in that defensive position, so the enemy concentrated there a force of more than two divisions, including



infantry, air force units, airborne troops, and Rangers under the direct command of the forward headquarters of the puppet II Corps.

They gathered together the remnant troops, reorganized their remaining forces, restored the units that had suffered heavy losses, and redeployed their forces, in order to fundamentally improve their defensive position in the Saigon-Gia Dinh area and in the Mekong Delta.

Around Saigon, to the north, the northwest, and the southwest, the deployed in each direction a division or a reinforced division. To the east their defensive force was gradually increased to 9 regiments and brigades of infantry, airborne, and Marine troops, and 4 armored regiments.

Saigon-Gia Dinh proper was defended by a number of airborne, Ranger, and armored units, the base defense forces, and the forces of the "Capital Special Zone." Three air divisions provided direct support in the Saigon-Gia Dinh area.

In the Mekong Delta the enemy still had three infantry divisions, 5 armored regiments, and an air division, concentrated to defend the Tan An-My Tho area.

In order to help the lackeys prolong their death throes the Ford administration set up an emergency air lift to transport weapons and equipment to the puppet army.

On the crest of our victories, taking advantage of the enemy's confusion and disintegration and in order to continually develop their attack and create a favorable position for the attack on Saigon, on 9 April our troops launched a strong attack to the east and entered Xuan Loc. At the same time, to the southwest our armed forces, in coordinating with the revolutionary masses, attacked the system of outposts, subsectors, and district capitals, thus creating a staging area for our main-force units and surrounding and dividing the enemy. That activity campaign disintegrated and annihilated additional enemy forces but did not fulfill the requirements that had been set.

On 14 April 1975 the Political Bureau approved a plan for an offensive campaign to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh -- the "Ho Chi Minh Campaign" -- a large-scale combined arms campaign which would combine attacks and uprisings to take the enemy's final lair. It would be a historic strategic war-deciding campaign to conclude our people's great anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation.

In accordance with the Political Bureau and the Military Commission, the reinforced 2nd Quan Doan moved south along the coast to participate in the campaign to liberate Saigon. On its path of advance that quan doan annihilated all of the enemy troops defending Phan Rang on 16 April, liberated Ninh Thuan Province and then, in coordination with uprising mass forces, liberated Binh Thuan Province and Phan Thiet City (19 April) and Binh Tuy Province and Ham Tan City (22 April). On 21 April the enemy troops at Xuan Loc had to withdraw and we liberated Long Khanh Province.

The U.S.-puppets were confronted with imminent annihilation and collapse from which they could no longer be extricated. They were, in their words, "in a situation of

real peril, with a life expectancy that can be calculated by the day or week, not by the month."

On 18 April, the U.S. President ordered the evacuation of Americans from Saigon. On 21 April Thieu had to resign and was replaced by Tran Van Huong in order to conform to the constitution, but in fact that was a way of turning his office over to Duong Van Minh, with whom they thought we would agree to negotiate. But on 23 April, in a speech at Tulane University, Ford declared that "as far as the United States is concerned, the Vietnam War is over."

By 26 April 1975 the main-force columns and technical combat arms had assembled on schedule in the various directions:

--To the northwest the reinforced 3rd Quan Doan coordinated with the armed forces of Tay Ninh and Saigon-Gia Dinh.

--To the north and northeast there was the 1st Quan Doan, reinforced with sapper, tank, and anti-aircraft units.

--To the east and southeast there were the 4th and 2nd quan doans, reinforced with artillery, tanks, anti-aircraft artillery, sappers, and commandoes.

--To the west and southwest there were the main-force 232nd Group of the South and the main-force units of Military Region 8, forces which were the equivalent of a corps.

--In the outskirts of Saigon and in the city proper there were sapper units and artillery units which had the missions of attacking airfields, ships, enemy fire-support bases, etc., in coordination with the mass political forces.

To the rear we urgently organized new reserve forces: infantry, anti-aircraft artillery, etc.

We concentrated forces that were sufficient to overwhelm the enemy.

On 26 April, Tran Van Huong turned over the presidency of the puppet administration to Duong Van Minh.

At 1700 hours on 26 April our forces to the east and southeast launched their attack on the enemy's eastern defense line. After 2 days of fighting we took Ba Ria, Long Thanh, the armored school at Nuoc Trong, and Trang Bom, and shelled and paralyzed Bien Hoa Airbase. Sappers infiltrated and took the Rach Chiec and Dong Nai bridges. The Command of the puppet II Corps fled to Go Vap. We continued to advance in the direction of Bien Hoa.

To the southwest, Group 232 took the Ben Luc-Tan An, Trung Luong-Tan Hiep, and Cai-Lay-An Huu segments of Route 4, which was completely blocked.

To the northwest we cut Route 22 (between Bau Nau and Tra Vo) and Route 1 (between Phuoc My and Trang Bang).

On 28 April, Duong Van Minh announced that he was assuming the presidency. At 1700 hours on the same day five A37's we had captured from the enemy bombed Tan Son Nhat airfields, then used artillery to interdict and paralyze the enemy's air evacuation, forcing the U.S. to carry out a "daredevil" helicopter evacuation. By the end of 28 April the puppet General Staff and strategic and tactical command organs had disintegrated, which caused the command structure of the puppet army to collapse.

On 29 April we launched a general offensive all along the front. After a day of fighting we had shattered and taken the bases on the outer perimeter of Saigon-Gia Dinh, cut off and annihilated the puppet main-force divisions and prevented them from withdrawing, and took staging areas from which to advance into the city. Our soldiers and people, squashing Duong Van Minh's plot to call for "a ceasefire and negotiations to turn over the government," resolutely carried out the order of the Political Bureau and the campaign command: "Continue to advance into Saigon according to plan, advance with the greatest possible vigor, liberate and occupy the city, disarm the enemy troops, dissolve the enemy's administration at the various levels, and thoroughly smash all enemy resistance."

During the day, from all directions the corps and units advanced rapidly and took such key objectives as Tan Son Nhat airfield, the puppet General Staff, the headquarters of the Capital Special Zone, the naval base, the Bach Dang port, the radio station, and the national police headquarters, and annihilated or routed all of the puppet main-force units. A joint unit of the 2nd Quan Doan took "Independence Palace" at 1045 hours, captured the entire puppet central administration, and forced the enemy to declare an unconditional surrender. The victorious unit raised the revolutionary flag on the roof of the puppet presidential palace, called ironically "Independence Palace," at 1130. That signified the end of the lackey regime of the U.S. imperialist aggressors.

The offensive campaign to liberate Saigon-Gia Dinh -- the historic Ho Chi Minh Campaign -- had won total victory. Our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation had won total victory. Our 30-year-long liberation war against imperialist aggression, under the leadership of the Party, had won total victory.

In addition to the military attacks, millions of people arose and, along with the armed forces, annihilated, routed, or forced the surrender of all remaining forces of the puppet army and administration and completely liberated Nam Bo.

On 29 April we liberated Hau Nghia.

On 30 April we liberated Long An, Binh Duong, Tay Ninh, Can Tho, Tra Vinh, Soc Trang, Rach Gia, Bac Lieu, and Phu Quoc Island.

On 1 May we liberated Vinh Long, Ben Tre, My Tho, Go Cong, Kien Tuong, Ca Mau, Long Xuyen, Sa Dec, Chuong Thien, and Con Dao.

On the morning of 2 May we liberated Chau Doc. The general offensive and general uprising of the spring of 1975 had won a complete victory.

--We completely smashed the gigantic military and police apparatus of the Saigon puppet army and administration, which the U.S. had provided with modern equipment,

and annihilated and routed more than 1 million troops and 1.5 million civil guards. The enemy forces included 4 corps, 13 infantry divisions, 18 ranger groups, 6 air divisions, 22 armored regiments, 66 artillery battalions, and all police, regional force, and civil guard forces.

--We captured or destroyed all of the enemy's weapons, war facilities, equipment, military bases, warehouses, airfields, and ports.

--We disintegrated the puppet administrative apparatus -- a very large control apparatus the U.S. imperialists had built up over a period of over 20 years -- from the central level down to the village level, and wiped out hundreds of military subsectors, thousands of subsector branches, and nearly 8,000 outposts.

--We completely liberated the South and captured many municipalities and cities almost intact. The lives of the people returned to normal immediately after the revolution took over.

The resolution of the Fourth Party Congress comprehensively and profoundly analyzed the victory of our people's anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation. That victory "was a great turning point in our nation's history. It gloriously concluded a 30-year process of war to liberate the country and defend the homeland, beginning with the August Revolution, and permanently removed the ruling yoke of imperialism which had existed in our country for more than a century, brought about permanent independence for our country, and unified our country and advanced it to socialism. That victory defeated the largest and longest neocolonial war of aggression since World War II, upset the global strategy of the leading imperialist country, placed the U.S. in the most difficult situation ever, shrunk and further weakened the imperialist system, strengthened the outpost of socialism in Southeast Asia, expanded and strengthened the socialist system, and further enhanced the strength and offensive status of the revolutionary forces of the world."

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**END OF**

**FICHE**

**DATE FILMED**

June 7, 1982